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Leadership challenge ruled out

Buoyant Tory MPs to stick with Major

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND JILL SHERMAN

SENIOR Conservatives capitalised on improved party morale last night by formally ruling out any challenge to John Major's leadership before the next general election.

The surprise move came after a series of strong question time performances by the Prime Minister exploiting the Harriet Harman affair, and as the Labour leader himself acknowledged the gains the Tories had reaped from Ms Harman's decision to send her son to grammar school.

The Conservatives were further boosted yesterday when a former Labour policy director suggested that Mr Blair's "stakeholder society" would cost billions of pounds, requiring heavy public sector investment and higher borrowing. The Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney, immediately declared that the "real cost of Labour" had been exposed and warned voters to watch their wallets.

Dr Mawhinney meanwhile warmly welcomed the Conservative 1922 Committee executive's decision to suspend the rules governing leadership elections to preclude a challenge in November. He said it was very sensible.

The decision was taken to prevent renewed speculation about Mr Major in the Conservative Party leadership race in the local elections in May. Senior party members said last night that a challenge this year would have been unthinkable, but that would not have stopped the press writing about one.

In the meantime, the present rules are being reviewed, with many Tory MPs believing that there should be no mechanism at all for a serving Prime Minister to be challenged.

The 1922 decision is evi-

dence of the dramatic change of mood among Tory MPs, who are eagerly awaiting the next opinion polls to see what impact the education row has had on their rating. Although most accept that they face an uphill struggle to pull back Labour's lead, they believe that they have been presented with a clear target.

Mr Blair recognised that last night in his first big party speech since Ms Harman said she was sending her son Joseph to St Olave's grammar school in Orpington rather than to a local comprehensive.

6 Routine loyalty, orchestrated adulation: after a long interruption, the Tory Party is back on track

— Matthew Parris, page 2

And the storm showed no sign of subsiding as emergency motions were tabled in three of the nine branches in her Peckham constituency, demanding she resign from the Shadow Cabinet.

In his "meet-the-people" speech in Brentford, Mr Blair addressed the issue head-on as he attacked the Tories. "It was not a member of the Shadow Cabinet that lost people their jobs, their homes, their businesses," he said. "It was not an 11-year-old boy that raised their taxes. It was a 17-year-old Government that has made too many mistakes and told too many lies for the public ever to forget or forgive what they have done to our country."

President Chirac, on the first state visit to America by a French leader in 12 years, has proposed a transatlantic charter to reform Nato and place more responsibility for security on Europe.

In his address to a joint meeting of Congress, Mr Chirac called for a renewed partnership. He said American commitment both militarily and politically, was still essential to the stability of a growing Europe, but he emphasised that Washington need not always play an active role. Solidarity was "the best security".

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Reform of Nato urged by Chirac

Dublin band has started legal proceedings to challenge the society's right to collect royalties for live performances.

Under the five-year system introduced three years ago, the society records details of performances at 500 large venues and then uses this as a yardstick for all halls. Writers of classical and minority forms of music allege that this ignores many performances of their work in small halls.

The society, founded by a group of musical hall composers in 1914, raises more than £150 million in royalties for its 29,000 members.

John Taylor, competition and Consumer Affairs Minister, said that the MMC report had found "evidence of inefficiency arising from defi-

cies in corporate structure and management practices". The MMC was "not convinced that the society's practice of exclusivity is so essential that no further exceptions can be allowed," he added.

A spokeswoman for the MMC said: "Lots of money that the society has been collecting has gone into administration, rather than to the artists."

The MMC report makes more than 40 recommendations, aimed largely at improving the society's efficiency and its accountability to composers and songwriters. The Director-General of Fair Trading has now given the the society four months in which to implement the reforms.

Dominic McGonigal, per-

former administrator of the Incorporated Society of Musicians, which represents composers, welcomed the findings.

"Their administration costs got up to 20 per cent of what they collected. We regard this as high and would like to see it reduced to 12 to 15 per cent."

Terri Anderson, a spokeswoman for the society, said that over a third of the actions proposed in the report had already been met.

John Hutchinson, who was appointed chief executive of the society last November, said: "Publication of the report will add a spur to the total strategic review of the business, which is planned for 1996."

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Songwriters deprived of royalties

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of composers and songwriters have been deprived of income by inefficiency and poor management at the Performing Rights Society, which collects royalties on their behalf, a government report concluded yesterday.

The report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission found that the society, Britain's only licensing body for composers and songwriters, operated in a monopoly situation and against the public interest.

The MMC's year-long inquiry into the society was prompted by long-running complaints from both struggling and well-known composers, including Lionel Bart, who wrote *Oliver!*, and the Irish rock group U2. The

Times on the Internet <http://www.the-times.co.uk>

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BY HARVEY ELLIOTT AIR CORRESPONDENT

A BRITISH Airways passenger jet had a close encounter with an unidentified flying object while landing at Manchester airport, an official report disclosed last night.

The Boeing 737, with 60 people on board, was overtaken at high speed by a wedge-shaped craft as the plane descended through 4,000ft on the final stages of a journey from Milan.

There was no sound and no wake but both pilots were so concerned that they filed a formal "airmass" report.

The Civil Aviation Authority launched an investigation, the fourth such incident since 1987, and after a year-

Captain Roger Wills reported that the UFO, which was emblazoned with small white lights and possibly a black stripe down its side, flashed silently down the side of the jet so close that his co-pilot, First Officer Mark Stuart, involuntarily ducked as it went by.

There was no sound and no wake but both pilots were so concerned that they filed a formal "airmass" report.

The Civil Aviation Authority launched an investigation, the fourth such incident since 1987, and after a year-

long inquiry concluded yesterday that they could find no likely explanation. The three previous reported sightings also baffled the CAA experts.

The incident happened at 6.45pm on January 6 last year with the aircraft just above the clouds and visibility at least ten miles. Then air traffic controllers had the following conversation with Flight 506:

B737: "We just had something go down the right hand side, just above us very fast."

Manchester: "Well there's nothing seen on radar. Was it an aircraft?"

B737: "Well, it had lights, it went down the starboard side very quick."

Captain Wills and First Officer Stuart are certain that the object was solid and not a balloon, a model aircraft or even a military "Stealth" aircraft which the captain had seen before and would have recognised.

Both pilots should be commended for their courage in submitting a report, the investigators said.

UFO 'buzzed' airliner at Manchester airport

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مكتبة من الأصل

Jolly jesters are in the mood for auto-slaver

The guffaws came to order, like canned laughter in a TV comedy show. Government backbenchers cheered John Major's arrival, cheered his departure, and fluttered their order papers in a closing ceremony that might have been rehearsed for an American football game.

Routine loyalty, orchestrated adulation: after a long interruption, the Tory party is back on track, locked in cruise-control, stuck on auto-slaver. What will have impressed the party managers at PM's Questions yesterday afternoon was not the way the

Tories cheered the Prime Minister's good jokes, but the way they cheered his awful ones, too. The synchronised panting of the poodles, the gentle slurp of the wet tongue against the brogue shoe ... these, like leather on willow, are music to a Chief Whip's ears.

If, in his dark days last spring, John Major had performed as yesterday, there would have been a few ragged cheers from his friends, no more. But now we shall report that he had another good day. Tony Blair another frustrating one. The change lies not in performance, but in mood. Blair and Major stalked

into the chamber, one after the other and almost in step, during a question to the agricultural minister about pigs. It is not clear whether they chose pigs especially for their entrance fantade, but the minister looked up from the dispatch box, startled by the passion his opinion on pig stalls seems to have triggered, as a rather complicated answer on the tethering of sows suddenly elicited a small cheer, then a larger one. Blair and Major sat down and adopted wise expressions as the minister ploughed on with his advice on pig husbandry.

First up, the brilliant mind Dr Charles Goodson-Wickes (C. Wimbleton) placed adoringly at the Prime Minister's feet a little fact he had discovered about trade union support for private hospitals. Mr Major found this fact "fascinating". Cue canned laughter.

Tony Blair, lips pursed, drowsed on for a while about administrative costs in the health service, and Major commented that the NHS had been "undermanaged". At that, Labour was supposed to howl, giving Major his cue to say "not my words, Madam Speaker..." and explain that the phrase was Margaret Beckett's. In fact Labour did not howl, but Major went ahead with his joke anyway, and the Tories roared with laughter anyway.

Blair now tried the same trick, offering advice on the NHS then demanding: "Are you prepared to tell the Secret-

iary of State to do as I ask?" At this, the Tories were supposed to jeer (they did), prompting Blair's reply "not my words, Madam Speaker..." and the hilarious revelation that a Tory had said this.

Really, this is getting ridiculous. What next? Will Blair say "Chilly, for the time of year [cue Labour yelp]". Not my words, Madam Speaker, but those of Michael Heseltine last Wednesday? "Labour MPs fall about"! Mr Blair's scriptwriting team do not seem to have grasped the point about these jokes: the phrase in question has to sound something you would

not expect the other side to have said. Permit this column to explain that it's no good finding any old phrase, it has to be topical, and helpful, to Labour's argument.

Mr Major then hit off one goodish joke welcoming Labour's boroughs with shares in privatised industries "to the stockbroker belt", and one so good joke, noting that the Labour leader had provided Harriet Harman with "an assisted place" in the Cabinet. Both were greeted with wild Tory laughter. But then nothing succeeds like success.

Not my words, Madam Speaker...

GPs and foreign staff drafted in

Hospitals struggle with shortage of casualty doctors

BY JEREMY LAURANCE AND JOANNA BALE

CASUALTY departments are facing the worst shortage of doctors that can be recalled and are struggling to remain open during the winter peak demand, consultants said yesterday.

The British Medical Association said there was a "desperate crisis looming" which was already leaving some casualty departments dangerously understaffed.

In areas such as Essex where recruitment is difficult, hospitals are having to offer "golden hellos" worth £2,000 to attract junior doctors and nurses. Some hospitals have hired GPs. Many are recruiting from the Continent, South Africa and Australia.

There has been a sharp rise in emergency admissions, estimated at 13 per cent last year, and a shortage of hospital beds. The BMA reported last month that casualty departments had been forced to close temporarily because they had no empty beds.

The reduction in junior doctors' hours and the ending of the compulsory requirement for trainee surgeons to spend time working in casualty have contributed to the shortage. An extra 2,500 senior house-officer posts have been created but there are insufficient graduates to fill them.

Dr Howard Badenham, consultant in charge of accident and emergency at London's University College Hospital, said: "I understand that juniors are being offered £1,000 when they take up the six-month contract and then £1,000 on completion."

Dr Helen Cugnoni, consul-

tant in Accident and Emergency at the Royal London Hospital, said the department had failed to fill all its 24 posts. "We are a teaching hospital. Other hospitals are likely to be worse off. I have never known such difficulties recruiting junior staff."

Hospitals are resorting to various measures:

- Mayday Hospital, Croydon, has agreed a £100,000 deal with local GPs to ease the burden on the Accident and Emergency Department; GPs take over the treatment of minor injuries.

□ At the Prince Charles Hospital, Merthyr Tydfil, GPs work in casualty at weekends. □ Edgware Hospital, in Middlesex, has three of six junior doctor posts to fill in its casualty department. Having advertised in journals, it is trying medical locum agencies.

□ Peterborough Hospitals Trust in Cambridgeshire had

to pay GPs £400 a night to staff casualty departments. After several months and recruiting from abroad, their posts are now full.

Alan Langlands, chief executive of the NHS, admitted last month that casualty departments were strained to the limit. In an interview in the *Health Service Journal*, he said: "I'm constantly seeing A&E departments under pressure. It's a long time since I have seen an A&E consultant wearing a shirt and tie. They are at it day in and day out."

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, yesterday admitted that the Accident and Emergency service faced problems but said they were not unexpected. "It doesn't take a rocket scientist to work out that if you have fewer people working shorter hours you need more people around."

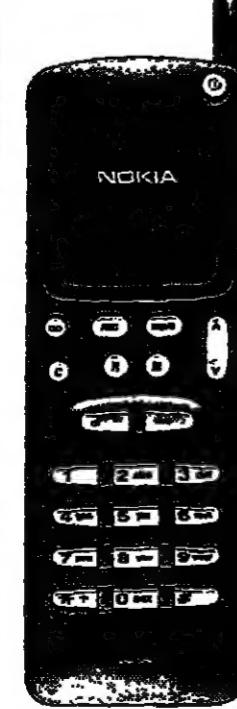
"That is exactly why my colleague Gerald Malone [the Health Minister] convened a meeting just before Christmas to see what can be done," he said. Mr Malone announced that restrictions on A&E departments appointing staff-grade doctors would be lifted, and an inquiry into giving GPs a greater role in treating minor injuries.

Mr Dorrell was speaking on Radio 4's *The World at One* in response to a survey by Dr Ian Stewart, consultant in Accident and Emergency at Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, who had said that up to one in five junior doctor posts would fall vacant in casualty by next week. Junior doctors traditionally switch to new jobs on the first Monday in February.

Langlands says doctors are working round clock

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MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH



An RUC officer clashes with a mourner at the funeral of Gino Gallagher in Belfast

Adams raises lone voice against all-party polls

BY MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON AND NICHOLAS WOOD

GERRY ADAMS was in danger of isolation last night in his opposition to elections in Northern Ireland. As the Sinn Fein president entered critical talks in Washington with the Clinton administration, Dublin appeared to be backpedalling on its outright opposition to elections as the passport to all-party negotiations about a permanent peace settlement.

Britain was hoping that Tony Lake, National Security Adviser to President Clinton, would put pressure on Mr Adams to drop his "implacable" opposition to elections as the next step in the search for peace. President Clinton was expected to "drop by" on the talks — a prospect that raised British expectations that the Administration was "sweetening" its message that Mr Adams should accept elections as a passport to all-party talks.

Dick Spring, the Irish Deputy Prime Minister, emerged from four hours of talks in London with Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, to concede that John Major's counter-proposal to last week's Mitchell report recommending decommissioning during all-party talks remained in play.

"The reservations still re-

main but at the same time we are prepared to discuss the proposals," Mr Spring told a news conference. Last week, he condemned the British plan as a "cul de sac".

Irish government sources admitted that although details and obstacles to progress had still to be resolved, the plan for an elected body as a platform for all-party talks had not been ruled out. In another sign that London and Dublin are working overtime to heal last week's rift, the two ministers agreed to hold a further meet-

ing in Dublin next Wednesday. There was more violence in Ulster yesterday as mourners clashed with the RUC at the funeral of a leading republican who was shot dead in Belfast earlier this week.

The funeral of Gino Gallagher, the reputed leader of the Irish National Liberation Army, had to be postponed until today after scuffles broke out outside his house in Belfast as police tried to prevent him being given a paramilitary send-off.

□ A university lecturer, who is a self-confessed member of the IRA, lost his appeal against conviction yesterday for plotting to bomb mainland Britain. Eilidh O'Halloran, who was jailed for 25 years in 1993 after being caught with bombs, Semtex, arms and ammunition, claimed that he did not get a fair trial at the Old Bailey.

The report from the RAF safety team is likely to play a part in Mr Portillo's deliberations, although British defence industry sources appear confident that the Defence Secretary will reject the F16 option.

Independent advisers to Mr Portillo have been pushing hard to lease the American jets, arguing that the Tornado F3s are difficult to service and have poor manoeuvrability.

Supporters of the F3 upgrade programme, which in-

clude the RAF board, insist

that the new air-to-air missiles

will make the air defence jet

much more capable because

they will be stand-off weapons

which can be fired a long way

from the target.

However, the air safety team from the RAF, which in-

cluded an F3 pilot, examined

the Tornado's flying capabili-

ty, not its weapon systems

and raised doubts about

turning at speed.

The special review teams

from the Inspectorate of Flight

Safety have already inspec-

ted the Chinook helicopter and the

Harrier GR5/7 and have

started an examination of the

Puma helicopter. The airworthiness reviews were set up in

the early 1990s after concerns

over a series of problems with

the Chinook.

BOTTOMLEY TO HOLD TALKS ON SPORTS COVERAGE

BY NICHOLAS WOOD

URGENT consultations on television coverage of premier sporting events will be announced by the Government today.

Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, will try to defuse a looming political row over satellite broadcasters monopolising national sporting occasions, such as the Wimbledon finals, by publishing a discussion paper. She will also invite broadcasters, the sports authorities, viewers' organisations and sportsmen and women to meetings over the next few weeks.

The BBC and ITV, backed by a cross-party campaign led by Labour, want the Government to ban subscription television services from acquiring exclusive rights to eight "listed events":

the Olympic Games, the Derby, the Grand National, the Wimbledon finals, Test matches in England, the football World Cup, the FA Cup Final and the Scottish FA Cup Final.

Mrs Bottomley will try to concentrate the debate on the need to balance the widest public access to great sporting occasions with the freedom of sporting bodies to sell television rights to the highest bidder.

However, it is understood that privately she is opposed to "heroic change" in the existing arrangements, which in practice debar satellite broadcasters such as BSkyB, partly owned by News International, parent company of *The Times*, from making significant inroads. Her stance has been bolstered by the decision of the International Olympic Committee to sign a deal with the BBC giving it

coverage of the Games until 2008. Her paper is likely to point out that most of the eight events are already the subject of contracts with terrestrial broadcasters and are not up for negotiation in the immediate future.

Mrs Bottomley is understood to believe that fundamental changes in the rules covering television rights can be postponed until the digital television revolution planned for the turn of the century comes about.

The new technology will create about 20 terrestrial channels and will greatly expand BBC and ITV outlets. She is said to believe that the advent of this new framework could prove the catalyst for a free market in big sporting events.

Her paper will say that many members of the public see events such as Wimbledon as an important part of

the national heritage and one that should be available as widely as possible. But that has to be balanced against the boost to sports facilities and coaching for young people that can flow from sporting bodies securing the full market rate for their star events.

Mrs Bottomley's hand has been forced by amendments to the Broad-

casting Bill, now in the Lords, tabled by Labour with cross-party support.

Lord Donoughue, Labour's national heritage spokesman in the Lords, said: "Together with Lord Howell [the former Labour sports minister] and leading peers from all parties, we are seeking to prevent anyone having a monopoly on the live showing of any of the eight listed events. We don't want to ban Sky from showing them but we will ensure that they will not have a monopoly."

Asylum details must be disclosed

Ministers were yesterday ordered to disclose details of discussions with the Government of Dominica about providing asylum for the Saudi dissident Muhammad al-Masari. Judge Pearl, at an Immigration Appellate Authority hearing, directed the Home Secretary to release information surrounding the case. Dr Masari's attempt to postpone a full hearing of his appeal against removal from Britain has been refused.

'Sex tours' review

A legal loophole that allows British criminals to escape punishment for offences abroad is to be examined in a full review ordered by the Home Secretary. The study is aimed at the growing "sex tourism" industry in which people travel abroad and commit sexual offences against children.

Fossilised flower

Fossils of what could be the oldest flowering plant have been found in Kent. The 10in plant, like a water lily, dates from 130 million years ago and was found by Dr Ed Jarzembowski, keeper of natural history at Maidstone Museum. It has been thought flowering plants did not develop until much later.

Scott publication

The long-awaited report of the Scott inquiry into the arms-to-Iraq affair is to be published on February 15. The findings of the investigation, which may heavily criticise ministers, will be released under the terms of the 1840 Parliamentary Papers Act, which will prevent individuals from suing.

Police win say

Asylum
details
must be
disclosed

Footballer jailed for butting opponent escapes ban



Ferguson served six weeks in prison for the offence

BY FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Everton footballer Duncan Ferguson yesterday won his legal battle to overturn a 12-match ban for head-butting another player. The ruling could pave the way for more sporting bodies to be challenged in the courts.

A judge has ruled that the Scottish Football Association's disciplinary committee acted beyond its powers in punishing the £4 million striker for an offence that happened nearly two years ago when he was playing for Rangers. Ferguson served six weeks of a three-month jail sentence for the assault.

Lord Macfadyen said the pun-

ishment should be lifted in a judgment released yesterday at the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

The successful judicial review in the Scottish courts is thought to be the first in Britain against a sporting body. Courts in England and Wales — which have taken a more restrictive view of the boundaries of judicial review — do not have to follow it. But lawyers believe it will have influence.

Edward Grayson, a sports law barrister and author of *Sport and the Law*, said: "Sports bodies have always been held to be non-public bodies, although they do have public functions. There have been a number of complaints against sporting administrative bodies, including the Aga Khan against

the Jockey Club over the disqualification of his winning racehorse, Alyssa, and the Football League against the Football Association over its establishing of a premier league. But they have all failed."

Mr Grayson said perhaps the English courts would follow suit and there could be a rash of similar challenges to the decisions of sporting bodies.

Ferguson, head-butted John McStay, a Raith Rovers player, during a match at Ibrox in April 1994. Ferguson's lawyers argued at a court hearing earlier this month that the SFA's disciplinary committee had not complied with the rules in imposing the 12-match ban and so had no power to do so.

The lawyers said that under

the association's rule book, the committee could impose punishment only in exceptional cases of a player's misconduct. This punishment had to be "additional": it could be imposed only where the player had been booked by the referee.

But as Ferguson had not been punished by the referee during the game for the offence, there had been no original punishment and so the committee could not impose an additional one, his lawyers said.

The SFA opposed the argument. But Lord Macfadyen said in the conclusion of his judgment yesterday that the committee had acted *ultra vires* in its attempt to deal with Ferguson's conduct "in an

incident which was not reported by any of the match officials and in respect of which there was no scale penalty incurred."

It follows that the severe censure and 12-match suspension which they imposed were invalid and of no effect." He said he would therefore rule in favour of the player.

Blair Morgan, Mr Ferguson's solicitor, said that the outcome was the end of a long nightmare for the player. "He is delighted he is able to resume his playing career. If the decision had gone against him, he would potentially have missed the next seven games."

"He is back to playing and back to match fitness. A different result today would have been a setback.

He can resume his career with Everton and Scotland. He is exceptionally pleased, it is the end of a very unpleasant period of his life."

Joe Royle, the manager of Everton, said he was delighted that Ferguson's ban had been lifted. "We are all delighted for Duncan, the club and the fans," he told Radio City in Liverpool. "Let's just get on with the football now."

"It has been hanging over his head and we are delighted. We don't want to say too much more apart from that because the thing has dragged on for so long and we want to keep it as low-key as possible."

Footballer banned, page 40

Part-timers killed in explosion were wrongly told boy was trapped in upstairs room

Two firemen die after going back into empty house

BY RICHARD DUKE

TWO part-time firemen died inside a blazing house yesterday after wrongly being told that a young boy was trapped inside. Stephen Griffin and Kevin Lane were killed when a sudden explosion wrecked the terraced house in the former mining village of Blaina, Gwent.

They had already brought out one five-year-old boy — who later died — but then went back inside believing that his younger brother was trapped.

Terry Glossop, Gwent Chief Fire Officer, said: "There was no one else in the house but these two firemen did not think for a minute of their own safety before going back into the building. We are all dreadfully shocked and saddened."

Other members of the fire crew, who witnessed the deaths of their colleagues, are to be offered counselling. They were in tears yesterday as they stood outside the charred shell of the two-bedroom house on a new housing estate at the edge of Blaina.

Mr Griffin, 42, a married hospital porter with two children,

incident and £5 an hour for subsequent hours.

Mr Griffin's widow Margaret said last night: "He was dedicated to the job. He knew the risks involved. He was on call last night and went out as normal last night but he never came back."

Flags flew at half mast yesterday over the borough council offices as an investigation was launched into how the fireman died. It appeared that a neighbour believed Joshua was still inside the house but he had escaped with his mother. The two firemen, wearing breathing apparatus and carrying a hose reel, went back into the house in search of the boy.

As they climbed the stairs an explosion threw them backwards into the sitting room which was already burning fiercely. The men died in spite of their colleagues' efforts to save them.

The death of the two part-time firemen takes the number of firefighters lost to 20 since 1990. There are 14,792 retained firefighters in England and Wales, who, apart from their retainer, receive £10.50 for the first hour of an

Emergency.

Both men, who earned a £1,500 annual retainer, were called out at 6am to tackle the fire which broke out at the house where Catherine Hardford, a single mother in her 20s, lived with her two sons, Daniel, five and Joshua, four.

The deaths of the two part-time firemen takes the number of firefighters lost to 20 since 1990. There are 14,792 retained firefighters in England and Wales, who, apart from their retainer, receive £10.50 for the first hour of an



The Blaina fire crew last summer showing Stephen Griffin, back row, left, and Kevin Lane, front row, right

er of Blaenau Gwent Borough Council, paid tribute to Mr Griffin, whom he knew socially. "He was a genuinely nice guy, an ordinary family man. The same goes for Kevin. They were just ordinary guys doing a job they valued."

At the village fire station colleagues of the dead firemen were still on duty yesterday. The station, which until yes-

terday had never lost a firefighter, normally has a full complement of 12 part-timers, operating a single appliance.

Chris Brown, the full-time station officer, said: "If there is a call out today we will respond as we always do. The men are dedicated to the job."

David Bishop, Mr Lane's brother-in-law, said: "Kevin was devoted to his service.

When he joined it was a new venture in his life. He had discovered some way he could help people."

Annette Edwards, a neighbour, said Mrs Harford had been asleep in the sitting room with Joshua when the fire broke out. Daniel was trapped upstairs.

"She was in such a state of shock that she just sat there staring ahead. The firemen

were incredibly brave."

Daniel, a pupil at St Mary's Roman Catholic school in Brynmawr, was brought out by firemen but died despite attempts to revive him. Evelyn Wilce, the school's headmistress, said: "The staff are deeply shocked and saddened by this terrible tragedy. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the families."

A HOTELIER was found guilty yesterday of discriminating against men for saying he wanted to hire a waitress. John Tatton was taken to an industrial tribunal for sex discrimination even though he eventually hired a man.

Mr Tatton, 47, made the passing remark to a jobcentre official after becoming tired of unkempt men turning up for interviews at the hotel he owns in Sandown, Isle of Wight. The official reported his comment and the Equal Opportunities Commission decided to take action. He will not be fined.

The tribunal in Southampton heard that Mr Tatton had telephoned the Shanklin Jobcentre last March to withdraw his advertisement for staff after receiving a number of unsuitable applicants. Rachel Badman, the official, said he told her: "I have had several scruffy men with rings through their noses or covered in tattoos. What I want is presentable females."

Mr Tatton told the tribunal he had been unhappy with the quality of applicants from the jobcentre. "There was one man they sent with dirty fingernails, bells hanging from his ears, who came in shouting across the hallway: 'I've come for the job, mate.'

Egyptian wine kills British tourist

BY STAFF REPORTERS

A BRITISH holidaymaker fell into a coma and died after drinking three glasses of Egyptian red wine contaminated with methanol.

Charlotte Common, 55, a widow, was staying in an apartment near Cairo with two friends when she bought the bottle of Egyptian Cabernet Sauvignon from a supermarket. She drank it with a meal alone in the flat. The next day she was taken by friends to a hospital in Cairo but lapsed into a coma.

Mrs Common, from Washington, Tyne and Wear, was flown home by air ambulance but never regained consciousness and died on January 9.

Yesterday Pamela Denis, who is still at the Abu Kessam apartments where Mrs Common fell ill, said: "We are very upset. I have been a friend for 20 years. The wine was bought from a local supermarket which is very popular with the British Embassy."

Methanol can be used as a cheap substitute for alcohol. Several people have died from drinking adulterated Egyptian brandies and gins. A notorious wine scandal in

Farmer told to return antiques to listed house

By ROBIN YOUNG

A FARMER claimed yesterday that a High Court decision ordering him to return a magnificent carillon clock and three huge chandeliers to a country mansion would make it unsafe for anyone to buy furniture from a listed building.

Hew Kennedy, of Bridgnorth, Shropshire, bought the French baroque clock and three ormolu chandeliers from a previous owner of Leighton Hall, Welshpool, a Grade II* listed Victorian neo-Gothic mansion built in 1851 for John Naylor of Liverpool, a banker.

The hall, commanding a view of Powis Castle, cost Naylor £2 million at the time. It boasts casements, towers, gargoyle and mulioned windows. The building has been largely unused since the early 1980s when it was briefly used as a school.

After Mr Kennedy bought and removed the clock and chandeliers in 1992, Montgomeryshire District Council issued enforcement notices requiring their return. The notices were upheld by John Redwood, then Welsh Secretary, in 1994 on the advice of a planning inspector that the

pieces were fixtures and not fittings.

In a judgment given in the High Court yesterday Mr Justice Ognall rejected a further appeal by Mr Kennedy and confirmed that he must return the ornate pieces within six months. Mr Kennedy was also ordered to pay costs.

"This is the first time a chandelier has been declared part of a listed building," Mr Kennedy said yesterday. "These are not even part of the original decor or the architect's design. They were installed by the owner after the house was built." He said the clock, which weighs several tonnes, was a free-standing item made for exhibition.

The court was told that the clock was adapted in Naylor's specifications in 1855 and decorated to harmonise with its surroundings in the hall's entrance tower.

The man who owned the hall when Mr Kennedy bought the pieces had it repossessed by the National Westminster Bank. The present owners, two Manchester metal brokers, are converting it into two large flats and an office.

The man who owned the hall when Mr Kennedy bought the pieces had it repossessed by the National Westminster Bank. The present owners, two Manchester metal brokers, are converting it into two large flats and an office.

It is not the first time that

Mr Nasarenko, who is a Russian Orthodox, has handed down an imaginative sentence. In November 1994 he ordered a man to cut off his ponytail as a condition to dropping an assault charge.

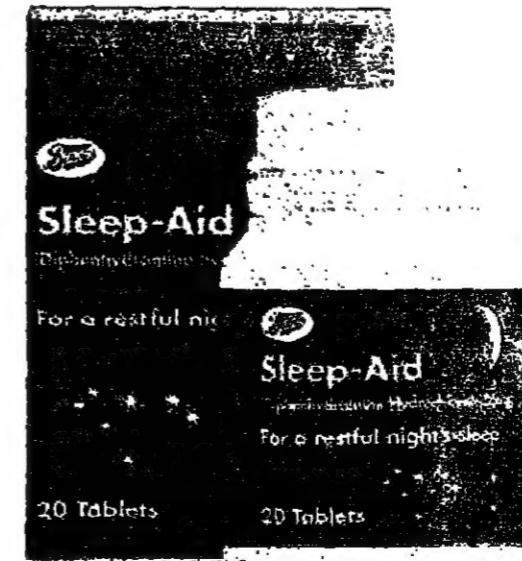
Last week a New York judge ruled that drug suspects had a right to run away from police because officers

were widely seen as "corrupt, abusive and violent".

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Michael Spindler
President and CEO
On behalf of Apple employees worldwide

e-mail address: AppleForever@apple.com

Royal troubleshooter promoted

Top job for man who sold Queen double glazing

By ALAN HAMILTON

MEN in grey suits are taking over the world. In Queen Anne's time, the Keeper of the Privy Purse was her favourite Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. From next August, the romantically titled post as head of the present Queen's money will go to a former senior partner in the accountancy firm KPMG.

Michael Peat, 46, has already made a brisk and bruising financial impression on the Queen's counting house during his four years as her director of finance, imposing savings and a degree of business efficiency hitherto unknown in the red-carpeted corridors of monarchy. The Queen yesterday announced his promotion to Keeper of the Privy Purse, Treasurer to the Queen, and Receiver General of the Duchy of Lancaster, the most senior financial post in the Royal Household.

When he takes over in August, Mr Peat will assume overall responsibility for the financial running of the Queen's household, her private estates, stables and studs. He succeeds Sir Shane Blewitt, 63, who is retiring and who came to the Royal Household after a career in the Irish Guards and the City. Day-to-day financial affairs will be handled by two deputies.

Mr Peat first worked for the Queen on secondment from the giant City accountancy firm founded by his father. His decision to join her full-time in 1990 coincided with the Royal Household taking over the annual £20 million budget for the occupied royal palaces from the Department of National Heritage.

He demonstrated how far the Royal Family has moved from the days of Queen Anne in February 1993, when he gave unprecedented television interviews explaining the Queen's decision to pay income tax. "The Queen is a very pragmatic person. I have to say that her expenditure is not

extravagant," he said. Since then Mr Peat has more than earned his £116,000 salary, plus performance bonus and an apartment in Kensington Palace, by making substantial savings. By installing double glazing, for example, he has saved more than £3 million over the past four years on the heating bill for Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. His target is to reduce the annual maintenance costs of the palaces to £15 million by the year 2000.

Figures released on the orders of the Commons Public Accounts Committee last year show that Mr Peat managed to cut the Queen's electricity bill by 9 per cent on the previous year, her gas bill by 17 per cent and water charges by 53 per cent. The public opening of Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle produced £4 million towards the castle's restoration after the 1992 fire.

Mr Peat has also been busy with the Civil List, which provides an annual grant of £7.5 million to the Queen for her public duties and the running of her office. Since Mr Peat took over, the list has built up a surplus of £16.9 million, from which the taxpayer will benefit when the list is renegotiated for a further ten years in 2001.

The job, however, has brought its own problems for the low-profile financier. Labour MPs criticised the



Michael Peat: a far cry from Queen Anne's days when the Keeper of the Privy Purse was a woman

Prince's TV firm to produce life of Queen Mother

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

PRINCE Edward's television production company, Ardent, is to make a £6 million dramatised biography of his grandmother, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, which will be shown on ITV next year.

The Prince has consulted his grandmother and received her permission for the eight-part series, which covers the period from her marriage to Prince Albert, Duke of York, in 1923 to the Coronation in 1953.

The actresses Jennifer Ehle, who starred in the BBC Television adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, and Helena Bonham Carter are being considered for the central role of the Queen Mother, which has provisionally been entitled *Century*.

A spokesman for Ardent said that although the Prince would have no direct editorial involvement in the production, "it would be daft if say he has not had influence in the early stages."

"The Royal Family will not be shown scripts for the serial. It will be a very dramatic account of the Queen Mother's early life. We won't just trawl through the history. The Queen Mother is a well-loved figure and it will be a fascinating story," she said.

Vernon Lawrence, managing director of MAI Produc-

tions, which has commissioned the programme for ITV, said: "The series will cover one of the most fascinating periods in our recent history, seen through the life of the Queen Mother."

"Her place and influence on the great events of this century have never been fully appreciated."

The series will be scripted by Julian Bond, 65, whose work includes the screenplays for the films *The Whistle Blower* and *The Shooting Party*.

The programme will be the Prince's second important project about his own family. Ardent Productions has already made a two-part documentary about Edward VIII, called *Edward on Edward*.

The programme will be shown later this spring to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of his abdication.

Ardent's first drama production, *Annie's Bar*, a political soap set in the tearoom in the House of Commons that deals with politicians' passions and peccadilloes, had its first showing on Channel 4 last night.

Matthew Bond, page 39

£400,000 which was spent on refurbishing the apartment before Mr Peat moved in. Buckingham Palace, however, pointed out that the Old Etonian contributed £450 a week towards the cost of the flat. Similar properties in the area, however, would fetch a weekly rent of £2,000.

In royal family finances, the big winner is still the Treasury. Total costs of monarchy, from the Queen's flowers to the Royal Yacht, are estimated at £50 million a year. Last year the Crown Estates, traditionally handed over to the Government at the beginning of each reign, delivered to the Chancellor of the Exchequer a profit of £34.8 million.

Some rising costs, however, have evaded even the cold unblinking eye of Mr Peat. Last year the cost of the Queen's congratulatory telegrams to centenarians rose from £40,000 to £101,000. Not even accountants can prevent people from living longer.



Sid Shaw in his shop. He is expanding into bedspreads, curtains and shirts

Presley trader keeps on rocking

THE first round of the fight between a small businessman and the Elvis Presley empire over who has the right to produce the singer's souvenirs ended yesterday with a victory for the entrepreneur.

The Trade Marks Registry, part of the Patent Office, based in London, provisionally allowed Sid Shaw to continue producing his *Are You Lonesome Tonight?* knickers, *Jailhouse Rock* ties and Presley soaps branded with a portrait of the "King".

Jack Soden, chief executive of Elvis Presley Enterprises, had objected to Mr Shaw using the name Elvis in his "Elvis Yours" merchandise. Mr Soden secured an injunction in 1987 preventing Mr Shaw from selling his souvenirs at Graceland, Presley's Memphis home.

Mr Shaw, who has a shop in Shoreditch, east London, argues that Elvis Presley Enterprises does not have sole rights to represent the singer. He has been fighting for the right to produce Presley memorabilia for 13 years. He said yesterday he would continue with his plan to expand into Presley curtains, bedspreads and shirts.



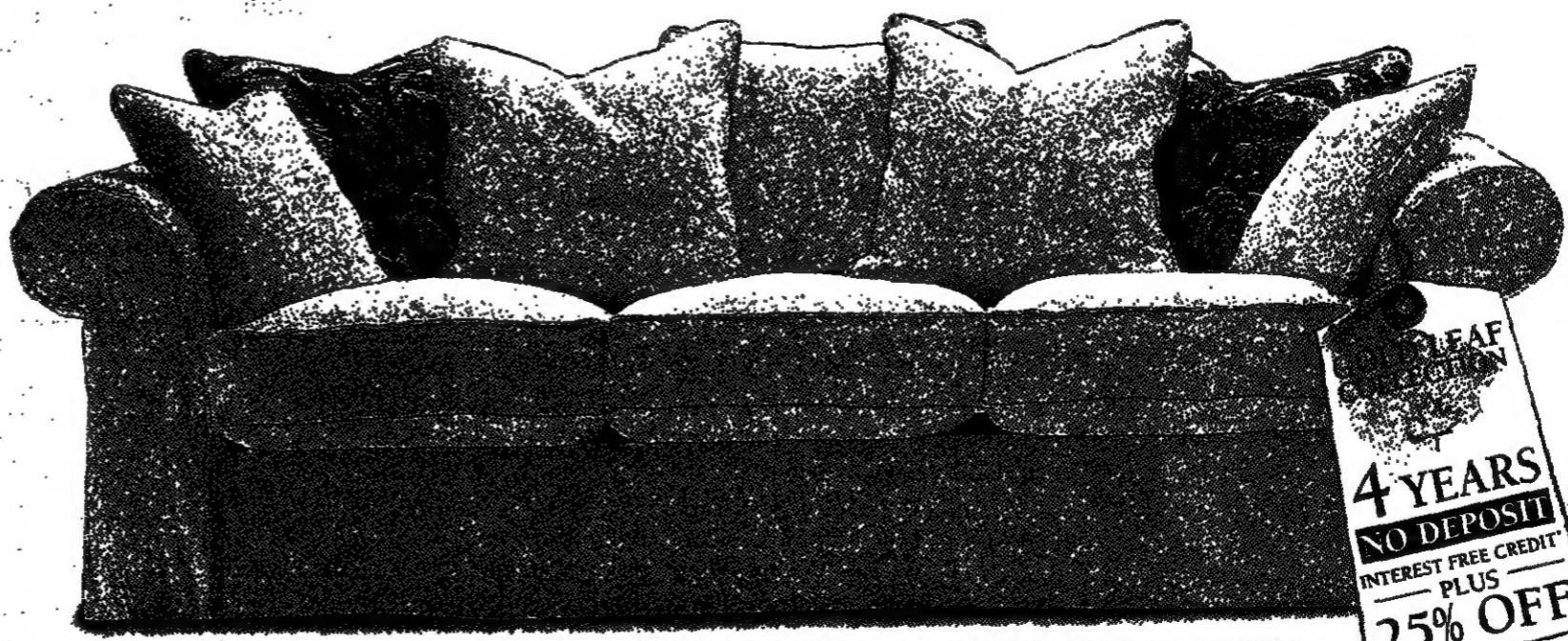
TOMORROW
Maxwell: Peter Jay's verdict

"His only success is the avoidance of disaster..."

So wrote Peter Jay in a memo to his successor after three and a half years as Robert Maxwell's "Chief of Staff". Read on tomorrow for Jay's recollections of the "pre-moral giant pachyderm" and his verdict on two new books on Maxwell's life and death.

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Devalued investments provoke funding crisis

Worshippers to be asked for 5 per cent of earnings

By RUSSELL JENKINS

THE Anglican Church's 1.5 million regular attenders will be expected to dig deeper in their pockets to fund the clergy's pensions under proposals to go before the General Synod next week.

Senior churchmen spoke yesterday of encouraging congregations to give 5 per cent of their earnings when the collection plate is passed around in Sunday services. On average parishioners will be asked to pay an extra £150 a week to fund the £50 million a year needed to meet pension costs from 1998.

Each diocese will be expected to raise its share from parishioners. They promise that the impact will be cushioned as the new pension arrangements will be phased in for up to six years.

The problem of clergy pensions has been looming since the 95 Church Commissioners, who manage assets of £2.4

billion, lost £800 million in investments devalued after the 1980s property boom.

When the commissioners assumed responsibility for funding pensions in 1954, they absorbed 7 per cent of income. That figure had risen to last year and is likely to swallow the entire income by 2010.

The synod will be asked to set up a pension fund, financed by contributions from dioceses and parishes and administered by a board of trustees. The Church Commissioners, who contributed £73.9 million towards pensions in 1994, will continue to guarantee payments to existing pensioners and commitments to clergy until a cut-off point — probably April 1998.

Vicars now face the task of selling the new policy to dwindling congregations who are already concerned at the way a significant part of the

Church's fortune was squandered in the late 1980s. Philip Mawer, the synod's general secretary, said: "They [parishioners] will be asked to pay more but it is not absolutely clear how much more. The debate is between the aspirations of the clergy and affordability." There are 11,000 clergy pensioners and

their widows, outnumbering the 10,500 working clergy. The standard pension, of two thirds of the previous year's national minimum stipend, stands at £5,800.

When a clergyman retires,

he can expect to receive the standard pension plus a lump sum of £25,200. Archbishops can expect twice the basic rate; diocesan bishops 1½ times the basic rate and suffragan bishops, deans, provosts and archdeacons 1¼ times the basic rate.

The pensions are linked to stipends, which have been rising faster than average earnings during the past decade. The Pensions Board, under pressure to make cuts, is scheduled to present its proposals next summer. One option is to link pensions to inflation.

The synod will also discuss the implications of the Turnbull Report, which sets out the biggest organisational upheaval in the Church of England for centuries. The recommendations, which effectively put the Archbishop of Canterbury at the head of a business-style management structure, have been widely criticised for concentrating power within the Church at the top.

A White Paper drawn up by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in consultation with the synod's standing committee has made modifications to appease the hard-line critics.

It recommends that the National Council, the proposed engine house of the Church, should be called Archbishop's Council. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York would become joint Presidents of the Council and fewer bishops would act as "executive chairmen" on the council.

The paper also emphasises the continuing importance of the General Synod.

Churches set up inquiry into immigration Bill

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY

MICHAEL HOWARD faces a fresh confrontation with the judiciary as a high-level inquiry is opened to examine his asylum and immigration proposals.

Senior religious leaders have worked with lawyers, charities and immigration welfare groups to set up a wide-ranging investigation of government plans to curb the rights of asylum seekers.

The Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland is the main mover behind the independent public inquiry. It is likely to bring the Home Secretary into direct conflict

with one of the country's most senior former judges, who is chairing the inquiry. Sir Iain Gilmour, who retired last year as a lord justice of appeal, is to chair a panel taking evidence from a wide range of organisations on the principles and practical implications of the Asylum and Immigration Bill.

Mr Howard and senior Home Office officials will have the opportunity to give evidence to the panel during the coming month. The move to expose the Bill to detailed examination will re-ignite the controversy surrounding the Government's refusal to set up a special standing committee

to analyse the legislation. Ministers have said the Bill is aimed at reducing the number of people making bogus applications for asylum in Britain.

The inquiry is expected to report before Easter, in advance of the Bill completing its passage through the Lords. New rules limiting the rights of asylum seekers to claim state benefits will be introduced next week.

Among other panel members are Rabbi Julia Neuberger, Dr David Say, assistant bishop of Canterbury, and Ranjit Sondhi, former deputy chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality.

Clergy seek showdown with dean

By RUSSELL JENKINS

CLERGY in the diocese have called a meeting with Lincoln Cathedral clerics next week to try to resolve the long-running public dispute between senior staff.

About 50 canons in the diocese intend to confront the dean, the Very Rev Brandon Jackson, about his future in the cathedral.

Canon Raymond Rodger, personal assistant to the bishop, the Right Rev Robert Hardy, said: "There is a groundswell of festering dissatisfaction in the diocese about what is happening. This meeting was called by the

canons because they want to express their feelings about matters at the cathedral and they want an opportunity to speak their minds to the dean and chapter."

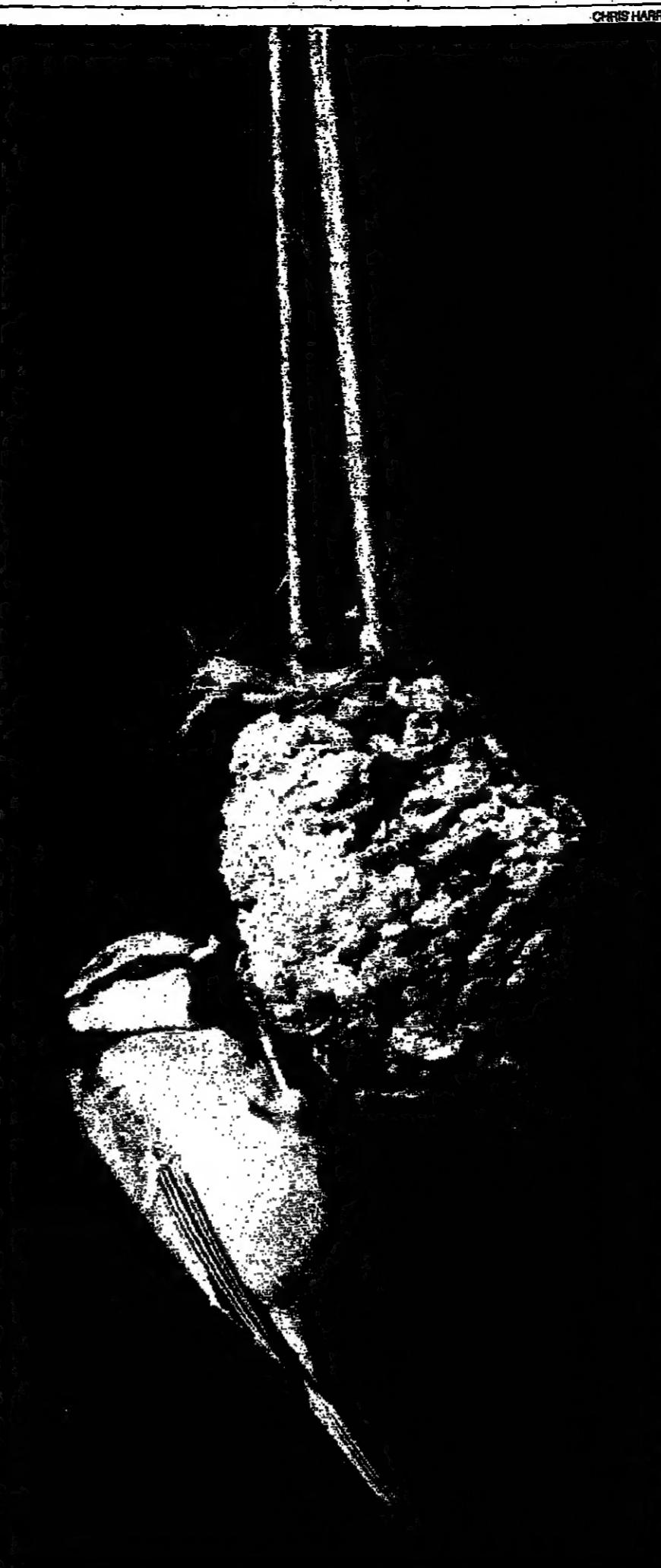
The row goes back to a loss-making exhibition of the cathedral's Magna Carta in Australia in the late 1980s. It was exacerbated last summer when Dr Jackson, 60, was acquitted in a church consistory court of sexual misconduct with a former cathedral warden, Verity Freestone, 31.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, became so alarmed at the dispute late last year that he sent two representatives to the dean.

One canon said: "They [the canons] are sick and tired of what is going on and they feel something needs to be done. I also sense there is very little support for the dean."

One canon said: "They [the canons] are sick and tired of what is going on and they feel something needs to be done. I also sense there is very little support for the dean."

GARDEN birds struggling to survive the freezing weather could be thrown a lifeline by householders who pour their cooking fat down the sink. Water bosses are



A blue tit tucks into fat-coated scraps at the Islington Ecology Centre in London

Bird lovers learn the fats of life

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

MORE than half the health authorities in the United Kingdom are ignoring government advice on the crippling bone disease osteoporosis, specialists said yesterday.

Lives are being put at risk and thousands of people suffering unnecessarily because of the failure to implement guidelines on treatment and prevention issued a year ago by the Government's Chief Medical Officer, Sir Kenneth Calman, the National Osteoporosis Society said.

A national survey by the society showed that more than half of health authorities had

made no plans to open specialist osteoporosis clinics for the one in three women and one in 12 men affected. More than

one in ten authorities admitted they were doing nothing.

The cost of a basic osteoporosis service is estimated at £50,000 in each health district, less than the cost of caring for two weeks' hip fractures.

Linda Edwards, the society's director, said: "Lack of action is condemning thousands of men and women to a life destroyed by fractures, pain and deformity because they are being denied the basic right to early diagnosis and effective treatment. Hundreds of thousands of people could avoid the disease if they received better advice on prevention and earlier treatment. It is grossly unfair that, because you live in one district and not another, your friends may be

getting help on the NHS while you receive no help or must travel hundreds of miles to obtain private treatment."

Osteoporosis is caused by loss of protein from bones, which become thin and brittle and fracture easily. Hormonal changes at the menopause make women especially vulnerable. The condition can be treated with drugs to slow or stop bone loss provided it is detected early enough. This can be done by a bone scan to measure the patient's bone density.

The health department guidelines recommended that health districts provide at least 600 bone scans a year. Only one health authority in eight is meeting this minimum.

appealing to cooks to mix the melted fat from the Sunday roast with seeds, dried fruit and scraps and put it out for the birds. When cooled, it can be hung in the garden, providing vital nourishment in the cold spell. Every year 100 tons of fat are poured into the drainage system in the Thames area, blocking the pipes in 6,500 homes.

TRAFFIC wardens in the old Devon port of Topsham have been accused of being too kind to motorists who ignore the parking restrictions. Shopkeepers claim the narrow streets are clogged because the two part-time wardens are not made of the right stuff when dealing with drivers they know in the closely knit town.

Instead of reaching out for their ticket pads like the best of their breed, they have allegedly sought out offending motorists in nearby shops and given them a chance to move their cars rather than pay the £20 fine.

One shopkeeper said: "The trouble is that people in Topsham are just plain lazy and they hate walking any-

where. There are perfectly good car parks but people will not use them. They prefer to park illegally outside the shops. Our wardens could win a prize as the kindest in the world."

Mary Evans, a Tory councillor on Exeter City Council, who lives in Topsham, said: "It is very difficult as one of them lives in the town and knows everyone. They do hand out tickets but they always do it with a smile on their face."

Inspector John Pulman of Exeter police said: "It is difficult for wardens if they are working in a small town rather than a city. Often a word in an ear is better than handing out tickets."

Surgeries and hospitals in the Thames Valley area were warned to be on the alert yesterday for a burglar who lost a finger during a break-in when he was attacked by a greyhound. Police were unable to take prints after the incident in Cornbury Park, Milton Keynes, because the dog ate the finger while his owner was dialling 999.

Red-handed

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NHS 'ignoring the plight of osteoporosis victims'

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

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One shopkeeper said: "The trouble is that people in Topsham are just plain lazy and they hate walking any-

where. There are perfectly good car parks but people will not use them. They prefer to park illegally outside the shops. Our wardens could win a prize as the kindest in the world."

Mary Evans, a Tory councillor on Exeter City Council, who lives in Topsham, said: "It is very difficult as one of them lives in the town and knows everyone. They do hand out tickets but they always do it with a smile on their face."

Inspector John Pulman of Exeter police said: "It is difficult for wardens if they are working in a small town rather than a city. Often a word in an ear is better than handing out tickets."

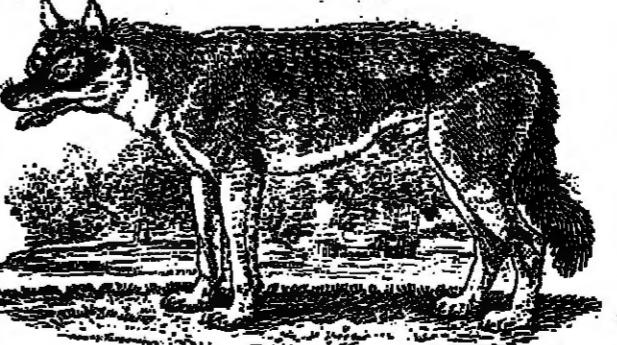
Red-handed

Surgeries and hospitals in the Thames Valley area were warned to be on the alert yesterday for a burglar who lost a finger during a break-in when he was attacked by a greyhound. Police were unable to take prints after the incident in Cornbury Park, Milton Keynes, because the dog ate the finger while his owner was dialling 999.



The mouse-eared bat has not been seen for five years. The wolf was the last British mammal to vanish, in 1745.

they are not rodents. A lot of people form their impressions from horror movies and associate bats with dark imagery and evil. They need lots of positive PR. We think there



The wolf was the last British mammal to vanish, in 1745.

are no more than 4,000 great horseshoe bats left and we also know that Bechstein's bat and the barbastelle bat, both woodland species, are extremely rare." The trust will

conduct the survey over five years with the help of 93 volunteer bat groups. The operation will involve a painstaking count of hibernation sites and summer roosting places, often in old buildings and hollow trees. "We will also be carrying out field surveys using detectors which can pick up the ultrasound signals emitted by bats." Mr

Catto said. "Bats are nocturnal creatures and use a sophisticated echo-location system similar to radar to navigate and to detect insect prey, though no bats are blind, contrary to popular belief."

One of the main problems for bats has been the decline in insects, their sole food source, because of increased use of pesticides by farmers and the loss of insect-rich habitats such as hay meadows and marshland over the past 50 years.

Trimming up woods, with the loss of hollow trees, converting old farm buildings into houses and blocking up caves and old mine shafts have also reduced the number of roosting and hibernation sites.

'Rioters' called for chicken curries

Prisoners involved in one of Scotland's worst jail riots stopped petrol bombing prison officers and smashing up furniture to ask negotiators for 22 chicken curries, a court was told yesterday.

The High Court in Stirling heard that rioters held a prison officer hostage and had threatened to stab him during a violent siege at Glencraig prison near Alloa.

Paul McGuigan, 31, a prison officer, said one of the two demands was for chicken curries for the 22 men

DNA testing could at last identify Sixties sex killer who quoted from the Scriptures

Police dig up body after 16 years in Bible John hunt

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH



Bible John's photo fit and Pat Docker, a victim

POLICE exhumed the body of the man they believe to be Scotland's most notorious serial killer at dawn yesterday in a snow-covered cemetery.

Inside a makeshift tent, six officers wearing boiler suits and surgical masks started digging up the body of John Irvine McInnes, said to be Bible John, a murderer who lured young women from a Glasgow dance hall to their deaths almost 30 years ago.

Two leading pathologists, Professor Anthony Basu of Edinburgh University and Dr Marie Cassidy, a consultant attached to Glasgow University, were present as the body was brought to the surface at Stonehouse cemetery, Strathclyde. They later began the task of extracting DNA samples in an effort to establish a match with semen found on the tights of Bible John's last victim, Helen Puttock. They may also take casts of McInnes' teeth. Teeth marks on the woman's body showed the killer had deformed front teeth.

The results of the tests may not be known for some weeks but police are almost certain

they have traced the killer. DNA found on the victim has already been matched with DNA from one of McInnes' relatives.

McInnes, known to friends and family as Irvine, committed suicide in 1980 aged 41 and is buried with his mother and father, Robert and Elizabeth, who are remembered by villagers as devout Christians who regularly attended the old gospel hall.

Police also had to exhume Mrs McInnes' body as she was buried on top of her son. She died in 1987 aged 91.

The dig took place at first light in accordance with an old Scots law. It was so cold that the sweat started to freeze on

the backs of the policemen digging. Portable heaters were brought into the tents and pneumatic drills were used to break up the ground.

Mrs McInnes' body was removed to the local undertakers. She is to be reinterred with a funeral service. Her son's remains were taken to the police mortuary in Glasgow.

The murders took place between February 1968 and October 1969. The three victims, Patricia Docker, 25, Jemima McDonald, 32, and Helen Puttock, 29, were strangled after leaving the Barrowland Ballroom in Glasgow with a man quickly known as Bible John because Mrs Puttock's sister, Jeanie, who had been with her on the night she died and met her killer, heard him quote from the Bible.

McInnes, a former Scots Guardsman, who often went to the ballroom, was arrested by police but Jeanie Puttock failed to pick him out at an identity parade. She had told police that she was certain she would recognise the killer.

The inquiry reopened six months ago after traces of semen were found on Helen



Police officers confer at Stonehouse cemetery during the dig yesterday; drills were needed to penetrate the frozen soil

Puttock's tights. DNA technology, not available in the Sixties, gave a reliable genetic fingerprint of the man.

The forensic science laboratory of Strathclyde Police had put out a routine request that all samples from unsolved murder cases be resubmitted for examination with the latest technology. Two detectives

then spent months sifting through the evidence and questioning the original detectives in the case. The thousands of witness statements were computerised and searched for matches and a list of a dozen suspects was compiled before police homed in on McInnes. A DNA test on a relative convinced them to

apply for a warrant to exhume his body.

The inquiry has shocked McInnes' family. His former wife Ella, a nurse, has remarried and lives in Saudi Arabia. She and McInnes had two children who live in England.

Villagers in Stonehouse said yesterday that they remembered McInnes as a smart

dressed furniture salesman who drank in local pubs.

Police in Lothian plan to use the technique again on the victims of the World's End pub murders in Edinburgh 19 years ago. Two girls aged 17 were abducted and killed after drinking there. Police, though, say there is no prime suspect yet.

A MAN who brought fire to a village by setting fire to cottages and haystacks was jailed for 12 years yesterday.

Alan Price, 35, a farm labourer, caused £29,000 damage over four years in Pitt, Hampshire, where he lived. It was luck that no one died in the fires, police said. The arsonist would be on the scene when the emergency services arrived. He once told neighbours whose house he had set alight to call the fire brigade.

Passing sentence at Southampton Crown Court, Judge Chalkey said Price had committed "an act of prolonged wickedness".

At an earlier hearing, Keith Cutler, for the prosecution, had said: "Whoever was responsible was putting the lives of the occupants in extreme danger. The prosecution is not suggesting he was attempting to kill the occupants of the houses. But we are suggesting that he couldn't care less. For some reason, he wanted his fire — so he could watch it or help the fire service. Villagers were in terror of one night something happening."

Price denied 11 charges of arson and eight charges of arson "being reckless as to whether life would be endangered". He was convicted on seven counts in December.

Guy Boney, QC, for Price, said that there was a pattern between him drinking and starting the fires.

Distressing signs parents must face



DOCTORS and nurses need to work for only a week or two in a maternity unit to realise the saloon bar opinion that all babies look alike is nonsense. There are huge variations and, although all children may appear equally beautiful to their parents, the medical staff know differently.

One of the stranger facial malformations that in a well-developed case could not be missed by the most confirmed male chauvinist is the Treacher Collins syndrome, which affects one in 50,000 babies born in Britain.

Without surgery the facial deformities, and the deafness that is associated with the syndrome, make it a most distressing condition. The deformation can affect the cheekbones, the chin and lower jaw, which is often so rudimentary that the child has a grossly receding chin.

The external ears may be entirely absent, squashed or very small and the middle ear also may be missing, leading to a conductive deafness.

The lack of cheekbones allows the eye to slope downwards and the eyelids to droop. The syndrome may be complicated by cleft palate. In half the cases of the Treacher Collins syndrome it is inherit-

ed in an autosomal dominant fashion, which means that if one parent is affected the odds are that 50 per cent of their children will also have some, or all, of the features of it. In the other cases the parents appear absolutely normal.

The degree to which the child is malformed varies in some cases the deformity is so trivial that it would be apparent only to a doctor, and would certainly be overlooked by friends and neighbours.

The frequent presence of deafness in the condition aroused the interest of the Hearing Research Trust. With the Wellcome Trust it has supported a team led by Professor Mike Dixon of Manchester University, which, working in collaboration with American scientists, has now isolated and cloned the gene responsible.

The research will enable doctors to offer more accurate prenatal and postnatal diagnosis to most of the families afflicted with the disease. Babies born with the syndrome are already benefiting from advances in plastic surgery.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

Calmer seas yield cheaper catches

WEEKEND

FISH landings have recovered after the storms and traditional white fish has dropped in price. Cod fillets are about £2.95 a lb and haddock £2.80. Among flat fish, lemon sole is an excellent buy, about £2.90 a lb for small to medium whole fish. Oil-rich fish are in fine condition, with large Scottish herring at 95p a lb and mackerel £1.20.

Cauliflower and carrots are more expensive but parsnips for baking and broccoli for steaming have fallen in price. Most meat departments have discounts on beef: sales have fallen by 17 per cent since the revived BSE scare. It is high season for Cape plums, priced from 65p to £1.20 a lb.

Promotions include: Asda: fresh pork shoulder £2.30 a kg, coleslaw 62p for 33g, light cottage cheese with pineapple £1.29 for 400g. Budgens: Valentine's Day cake £2.99, white seedless grapes 99p a lb, six fresh red roses £3.99.

Co-op: fresh minced lamb £1.69 for 400g, skinless boneless chicken thighs £2.99 for 550g, steak, kidney and onion pies 99p for four. Harrods: game torte £10.95 each. English roast beef £3.25.

ROBIN YOUNG

Currys

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SALE PRICE £149.99*

HOVER 1200 Spin Soft Wave Autowasher

- 10lb washload.
- 13 programmes.
- Crease guard button. Model AC330. Was £469.99. Now £389.99.

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HOVER 1300 Spin New Wave Washer Dryer

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- Electronic load sensor.
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HOVER 10lb New Wave Tumble Dryer

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- 3 heat settings.
- Final cool tumble. Model DF020. Was £299.99. Now £229.99.

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HOVER Full Size Soft Wave Dishwasher

- Takes 12 place settings.
- 3 programmes.
- Adjustable upper basket. Model D7436. Was £399.99. In-store Price £279.99.

VOUCHER PRICE £269.99*

HOVER Full Size Crystaljet Dishwasher

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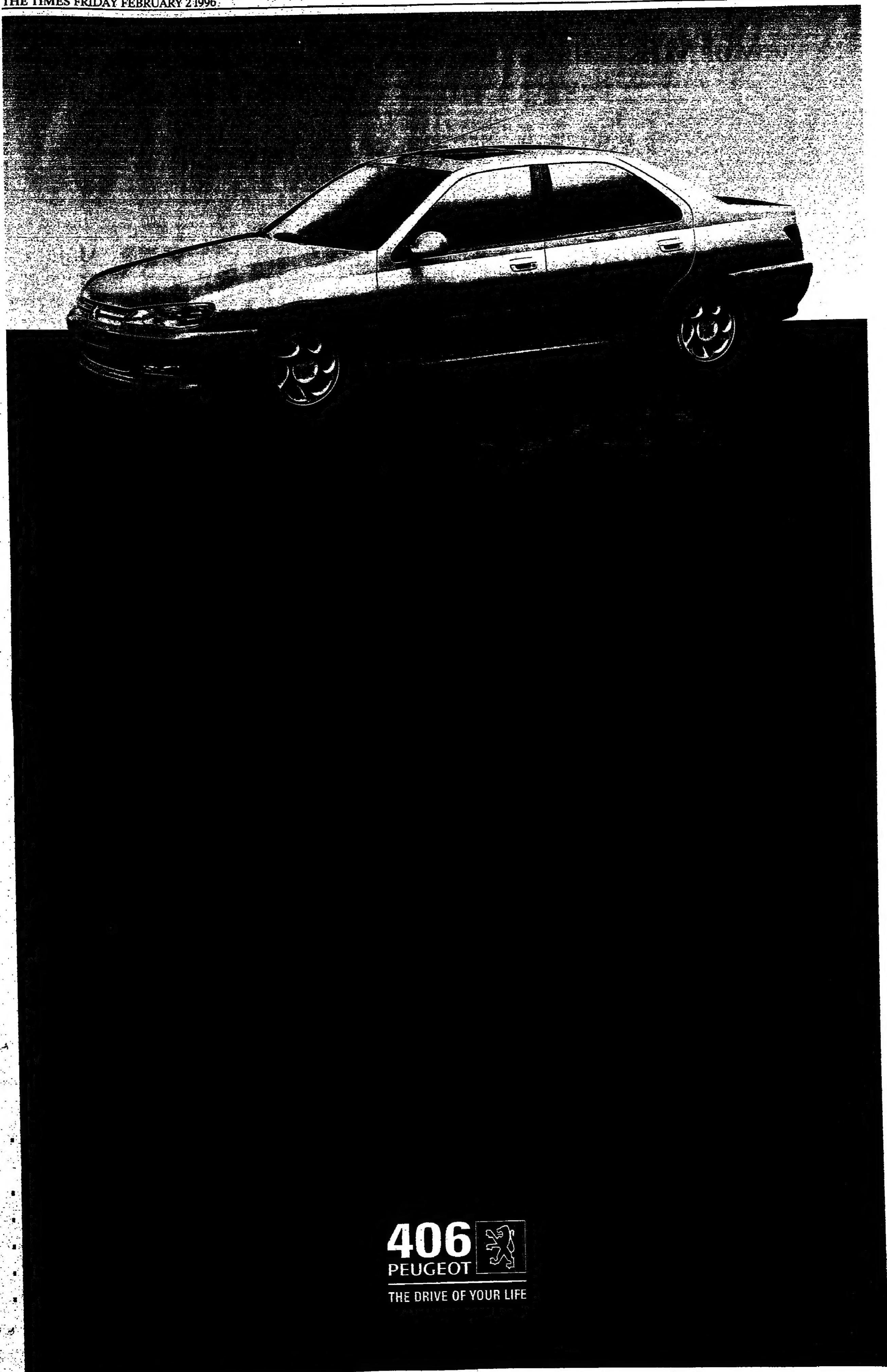
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THE DRIVE OF YOUR LIFE

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Britannia up 12% as provision reduced

BY KAREN ZAGOR

BRITANNIA, which will be Britain's third biggest building society when the latest wave of mergers and conversions subsides, posted a 12 per cent rise in full-year pre-tax profits to £112.7 million.

Profits were helped by a 43 per cent reduction in provisions for bad debts to £25 million.

During the year, Britannia's total mortgage lending fell 24 per cent to £903.8 million, but its loan book rose 4 per cent as a result of the purchase of the Lloyds Bowmaker mortgage book in July. The society blamed the decline in lending to a subdued housing market in 1995.

The number of mortgage accounts in arrears last year dropped 40 per cent. The Britannia said this was achieved by reaching realistic payment agreements with customers rather than significantly increasing the number of repossessions.

Provisions for bad and doubtful debts linked to mortgages were cut by 45 per cent to £18.3 million in the year.

In 1995 the Britannia's assets advanced 10 per cent to £14.9 billion. Net interest receivable edged 2 per cent higher to £193 million.

Britannia's wholly owned life assurance subsidiary brought in profits of £20.5 million, from £17.7 million in 1994. The improvement was credited to lower management expenses and stricter cost controls.

John Heaps, chief executive, stressed that the society is firmly committed to mutualism and would shortly reveal long-term rewards for current and future members.

Although the Britannia led the pack when it announced plans to offer members tangible rewards last July, it has lagged behind the Bradford & Bingley and the Yorkshire building societies in unveiling its membership loyalty scheme.



Sir Alastair Morton will explain how he believes large-scale private sector projects should be handled in future

Morton launches attack over Eurotunnel debts

BY GEORGE SIVELL

SIR ALASTAIR MORTON, co-chairman of the hugely indebted Eurotunnel group that runs the channel tunnel, is expected today to say that future private sector financial projects should not follow the Eurotunnel model.

In a speech to the Engineering Council, Sir Alastair is expected to lambast the Government's handling of the Eurotunnel project. Sir Alastair, who recently stepped down as chairman of the Private Finance Initiative, is likely to say: "A PFI concession or contract is not like a privatisation prospectus — something Her Majesty's Government can file and forget after a few years."

For the future, Sir Alastair believes: "Project financing must evolve because infrastructure and public service needs are mounting across the face of Europe, which faces the 21st Century with an investi-

ment backlog. You cannot simply spend huge public funds to make good a massive investment deficit."

Sir Alastair is also convinced that: "The project structure erected in 1985-87 had welded into it the excessive stresses which have since caused so much difficulty. When the overstressed structure failed to deliver on time, the too-short financing structure staggered and then fell. We are now rebuilding the finances to last but I say again, the Channel Tunnel is and will be open for business."

He is convinced that both the specifying authority and the project operator "have to make promises and keep them — adjusting where necessary to ensure delivery of the real substance of what was promised". Sir Alastair is expected

to make the point that "Eurotunnel is currently making clear to the English and French Governments that certain promises have not been delivered".

He is expected to list exam-

ples of where project parameters were changed during its construction and early life:

□ Ministers were able to force more safety provision into the design and operation without paying for it.

□ A PFI project is done by private sector capital to the specification of a government department, agency or authority.

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House prices rise again

BY CAROLINE MERRELL

HOUSE prices have risen for the sixth month in succession, according to the monthly Halifax house price index.

The small monthly rise of 0.1 per cent in January means that house prices have risen by 1.3 per cent over the past six months, but are still 1.2 per cent below their level of a year ago. The Halifax said: "This is further confirmation that house prices are no longer generally falling, but our optimism about recovery is still tinged with caution."

At the beginning of the year, the Halifax, Nationwide and other house price analysts predicted that prices would rise by 2 to 3 per cent over 1996.

They claimed that a house price recovery would be helped by tax cuts, money from maturing Tesco and the profits reaped by private investors from the bids in the electricity sector.

The prices paid by first-time buyers also rose by 0.1 per cent in January, but are down 0.1 per cent compared to the same time last year. The price of new houses rose by 2.4 per cent in January and are now 5.9 per cent above their level of a year ago.

Forecast by LBS expects global recovery in 1996

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

INTEREST RATE cuts over the past year in America, Europe and Japan should prevent the current slowdown in the world economy from developing into a recession, according to the London Business School.

In its latest economic outlook, the LBS forecasts that growth in the Group of Seven industrialised countries should average 2.3 per cent this year, a similar rate to that recorded in 1995.

Two other reasons are highlighted to support its view of a global recovery this year. First, an environment of low inflation will allow interest rates to fall further, if necessary, in most economies. Secondly, the economies of Asia and the Pacific region remain buoyant and there are now genuine grounds for optimism that Japan will see a more meaningful recovery this year.

The British economy is forecast to grow by around 2.6 per cent, lower than the Chancellor's forecast of 3 per cent but still the fastest growth of any European country. The school said that it expects growth to

SIB acts on rogue forex dealers

BY JON ASHWORTH

THE Securities and Investments Board (SIB) has moved to clamp down on unauthorised foreign exchange dealing amid fears that private investors are being exposed to high-risk transactions and high-pressure sales tactics.

Firms have been given a month to seek authorisation under the Financial Services Act (1986) or risk being closed down.

The number of firms to offer such services has soared in the past year, and currently stands at about 37. They have circumvented the rules by rolling over trading contracts every six days, just short of the seven-day limit under which authorisation would be required. Investors who deal under such conditions do not have access to the Investors Compensation Scheme (ICS). The SIB is anxious to bring such dealing into its net.

One investor reported to have lost close to £200,000 in five months of trading the currency markets. He is reported to have paid £35,700 in commission and fees. Another investor reportedly lost £74,200, and paid £27,000 in fees — about 36 per cent of his trading losses. Investors have complained of being telephoned as many as ten times a day by aggressive salesmen.

The SIB received a number of legal submissions from firms which claim they do not require authorisation in order to trade. Some may challenge the SIB ruling in court. About a quarter of the firms involved have indicated that they will seek authorisation.

Peter Ellis, managing director of London Currency Exchange, based in west London, welcomed the SIB move, and said the firm would be seeking authorisation. He said: "Currency trading is very much in vogue at the moment. People are much more aware of what is going on in the market." Another London firm, Global Foreign Exchange, refused to take questions over the telephone.

Firms have until March 1 to apply for authorisation. The SIB is prepared to seek High Court injunctions to restrain unauthorised trading.

Bundesbank leaves rates untouched

THE Bundesbank left official German interest rates on hold yesterday, as the financial markets had expected, and, at the same time, appeared to call a halt to its policy of pushing its key repo money market rate lower by announcing a fixed-rate tender for the next fortnight at 3.30 per cent, 10 basis points lower than earlier this week. The repo rate has fallen by 0.35 per cent over the past four weeks, an unusually large drop.

In spite of the lack of action on leading rates from Germany, the Bank of France responded to the cut in interest rates in America on Wednesday by cutting its key intervention rate to 4.05 per cent, from 4.20 per cent. The French central bank last cut rates on January 18, when it shaved 0.25 per cent off the intervention rate. The Fed's decision to cut American rates appeared to be vindicated yesterday by news that US consumer prices had risen by only 0.2 per cent in December.

Whirlpool disappoints

WHIRLPOOL CORP reported "disappointing" fourth-quarter and full-year profits owing to sharp cost increases and a deterioration of markets in Western Europe. Confirming its earlier forecasts, the world's leading manufacturer of major home appliances reported net income of \$18 million, or 25 cents a share, for the three months to December 31, and profits of \$209 million, or \$2.80 a share, for 1995. While those earnings were better than 1994 when the company took a \$187 million restructuring charge, they were well below the last year's operating results.

Vibroplant shares fall

SHARES in Vibroplant fell by more than 11 per cent after the plant hire company warned shareholders that trading conditions have continued to deteriorate in the UK. The shares fell to 86p from 97p yesterday after Jeremy Pilkington, chairman and chief executive, said the impact of the downturn would be reflected in second-half results. The company has posted to shareholders details of the proposed disposal of its Hi-Lift subsidiary in America to Primeco Inc for a total of £63.8 million. Terms of the deal will be considered by shareholders at an extraordinary meeting on February 15.

Tax-avoidance inquiry

THE Tax Law Review Committee, set up by the Institute for Fiscal Studies in autumn 1994 and enjoying cross-party support, announced yesterday that it is to look at tax avoidance. The project is expected to take at least a year. The committee said many people believed that government efforts to thwart tax avoidance is a root cause of incomprehensible tax legislation. The tax-avoidance project will complement the work already being undertaken by the committee on simplifying the tax system, and the Inland Revenue's project to rewrite tax law in plain English.

Deloitte global move

THE management consulting arm of the former Touche Ross has joined up with its US company to form a new global management consultancy, Deloitte & Touche Consulting Group. The aim is to separate the new company from its accounting and tax parent, Deloitte, Tohmatsu International. The move is part of the current trend within accounting organisations to follow their clients in linking up and providing identical services across borders. The new company will owe its partner's incomes and its profits to a global rather than the UK company.

TRW plans £24m plant

AN AMERICAN company is to create a total of 275 new jobs with a £24 million factory development in Peterlee, County Durham, an area which has been hit by pit closures. TRW Inc, the supplier of car safety components, will build a 50,000 sq ft factory to produce airbag inflators. It will employ 60 people when it opens in December, but the workforce is expected to rise to 275 by the year 2000, bringing the total number of employees at TRW's 10 factories around Britain — half of them in the North East — to 2,800.

Discrimination 'rife'

BRITAIN'S workplaces are "rife" with discrimination, business leaders will be told today as new survey evidence suggests that almost half of the UK's employees believe that discrimination at work is widespread. Details of survey by consultants Austin Knight, which will be put to a London conference today, show that only 53 per cent of the people sampled felt that career opportunities are the same for everyone with identical qualification, regardless of sex, race or other differences. Age was seen as the most widespread form of discrimination.

Higher pay forecast

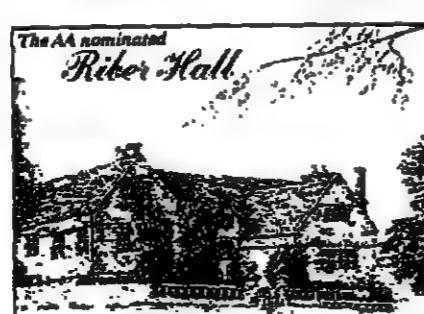
PAY increases for clerical and manual workers are set to rise in the coming year, a new pay study forecast today. The survey by Reward, the pay group, shows that clerical staff received rises averaging 3.2 per cent in the past 12 months, while increases for manual workers were 3 per cent. But employers sampled in the survey of more than 1,000 organisations suggest that increases are likely to be higher this year, with rises of 3.7 per cent for clerical workers and 3.5 per cent for manual employees.

Baldwins halts flotation

BALDWINS Industrial Services, the UK's third largest mobile crane hire and lifting service business, has shelved its proposed flotation, the group announced yesterday. It said that the terms available for the flotation were not acceptable to the family shareholders, who had decided not to proceed at this time. The company, based at Slough, Berkshire, said it and the shareholders were reviewing options with their professional advisers.

THE TIMES
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Clifford Chance faces writs over Canary Wharf

Canadian banks sue law firm

BY JON ASHWORTH
CLIFFORD CHANCE, the UK's largest law firm, has confirmed that it is being sued for £610 million by four Canadian banks that suffered in the Canary Wharf collapse, but dismissed the action as "nothing to worry about". Writs were lodged in London and Toronto last June, but the action has only now come to light.

Royal Bank of Canada, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC), National Bank of Nova Scotia, and Prince al-Waleed bin Talal, the billionaire Saudi investor, the £800 million deal was clinched in December 1995, opinion in 1999. The four were in the consortium of banks that controlled Canary Wharf until its recent sale, and claim to have lost out through allegedly negligent advice.

The Docklands development collapsed into administration in 1992 after the failure of its parent, Olympia & York, to which the four claimant banks had lent £450 million in all. The firm said: "The Canadian courts are currently determining whether they have jurisdiction... To date, no evidence has been produced to us that any loss was incurred by these banks in relation to these loans following the collapse of Olympia & York as a result of any alleged negligence on the part of Clifford Chance.

If the banks pursue the claim, they will have to provide evidence of the alleged loss. They have yet to provide any evidence. We are confident that there is nothing to worry about."

According to CIBC's claim, the bank's belief is that it would control the completion, leasing and sale of Canary Wharf if Clifford Chance's alleged negligence. Sir Peter Levene, the former chairman of Canary Wharf, has criticised as "abominable" the role of North American banks in the run-up to the sale, singling out CIBC and Royal Bank of Canada for criticism.

Bank
Banks
Australia \$ — 2.13 1.97
Austria Sch. — 18.87 15.37
Belgium Fr. — 40.27 34.97
Canada \$ — 2.189 2.029
Cypria Cyp. — 0.795 0.704
Denmark Kr. — 0.94 0.88
Finland Fr. — 7.45 6.11
France Fr. — 6.15 7.60
Germany DM. — 2.41 2.20
Greece Dr. — 300.00 388.00
Hong Kong \$ — 12.23 13.95
Ireland P. — 1.02 0.94
Israel She. — 5,150 4,500
Italy Lira — 250.00 230.00
Japan Yen — 170 160
Malta — 0.82 0.95
Netherlands Gd. — 2.879 2.449
New Zealand \$ — 2.40 2.18
Norway Kr. — 10.47 9.25
Portugal Esc. — 244.20 220.00
S Africa Rd. — ref. 1.82
Spain Pes. — 197.00 184.00
Sweden Kr. — 1.11 1.10
Switzerland Fr. — 1.97 1.79
Turkey Lira — 1.612 1.488

Refers for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Hippocratic oath doesn't preclude making a profit Taking stock of the biotech boom EU offers a poor role model

GLAXO WELLCOME will make at least £3 billion of profit this year out of the sufferings of millions of people.

The company has aroused the occasional ire of Aids campaigners for charging for its AZT compound, but this is an isolated case. Pharmaceuticals companies may not be the most popular around, but there is no serious ideological opposition to their right to turn a profit.

Any local health trust, however, would blanch at the mere mention of the "P" word and must these days avoid all mention of its near neighbour in the dictionary, privatisation.

It is an odd dichotomy, but we have such utopian expectations of the caring professions. Drug companies may make money, but doctors must not.

Private medicine occupies an uncomfortable position somewhere in the middle, but the private medical insurers have always had the fig-leaf of being provident mutual companies. They may charge for cover, but such charges balance costs and there are no profits.

Once PPP, one of the three big mutual companies providing private insurance cover, does demutualise, it will have to cope with both "P" words, and the resulting political stink.

If the insurer is quoted on the stock market, it will not be for

long, because there are any number of potential buyers.

Demutualisation, however it is sold to members, looks like nothing less than a precursor to a sale. But a profit-making PPP, whether freestanding or part of a bigger group, would look uncomfortably like an American ambulance-chaser to some – and that is before executives start casting in their share options.

Flootation is an option now because the private health insurance industry is in rather better shape than a few years ago, when several of the mutuals nearly went bust. The problem was the frequency of trivial claims, and the tendency of patients with pre-existing complaints to sign up shortly after they have been diagnosed.

The solution was a more rigorous weeding-out of the latter, and a more restrictive approach to problems treated.

There are currently approaching seven million people covered by private health insurance, and the majority did not sign up for it – the cover arrived as part of their terms of employment under a company scheme. The

industry is concentrating on those outside such schemes, or those pushed outside by companies contracting out their staff.

Demutualisation will bring its benefits, in terms of capital-raising and the cutting of cumbersome historic ties with the medical profession. But imagine the scene a few years hence. The chief executive of PPP is grilled by City analysts at the annual results. How many medical staff have been laid off? Is there scope for further cuts in the services provided? How much have costs per patient fallen? It all seems a long way from the Hippocratic oath.

Up like a rocket, down like a stone

If the rapid rise in biotechnology shares last year was baffling, yesterday's equally rapid collapse was entirely predictable. Celltech reported that it and Merck, its financial sponsor, had scrapped the development of a once-promising asthma drug, known only as CDP 840. Celltech investors fled in droves, and the

shares lost a quarter of their value within minutes.

The City's savviest dealers should have seen it coming. Celltech and its rivals climbed throughout 1995 and went into overdrive in December, when British Biotechnology, the best-known player in the sector, revealed positive results on the clinical trial of a cancer drug.

Celltech and the others did absolutely nothing to warrant their gains; they just had the good fortune of being part of the same industry and were swept along in the euphoria. Not long ago the phenomenally successful flotation of America's Netscape triggered the same hysterical buying of the fledgling Internet companies.

Investors routinely forget that it is one thing to discover a compound and prove it can help mankind, and another to develop and market it. The tiny biotech companies are fairly good at the former but rarely have the financial means for the latter. It takes years of effort and hundreds of millions of pounds to bring a drug to market, and they cannot do it alone.

So Glaxo Wellcome, Zeneca and SmithKline Beecham could reveal at any time that their own rocket scientists have discovered dozens of razzle-dazzle compounds. They don't bother because a compound without a fully financed development plan is next to worthless.

The biotech sector will survive yesterday's sell-off. Good clinical trials from any of them will trigger a new wave of buying. So will the publication of encouraging circulars from brokers, who have their own reasons for starting the ball rolling again.

The industry, however, has a long way to go before it loses its casino image. The next rally, inevitably, will be followed by another dramatic sell-off. And so

it will go on. For private investors, careful timing is the only guarantee of success. That, and not being too greedy.

Go East, young free-trader

THE great case against the Maastricht mentality was that widening the union to include former Communist states was more urgent and important. Not so, the anti-Maastricht Adam Smith Institute claims in a new report, *The Eastern Market*.

According to the author, Michael Bell, a former Brussels groupie, the countries of Eastern and Central Europe would just prop up the EU's centralised, bureaucratic and protectionist tendencies. They would be better off spilling Hong Kong's open-trade practices in their own outward-looking free-trade area.

In any case, the EU will not easily or rapidly let them in. All this is undoubtedly true, but another great lost opportunity of 1999. It would have been better if Austria, Sweden and Finland had stayed out of the

EU, instead expanding their rump free-trade area to the East. This could have encompassed Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and former Soviet states faster in a less demanding, more honest, half-way house.

Austria et al had other entrenched priorities, and the EU marketed itself skilfully. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic judged, as Greece, Spain and Portugal once did, that joining the EU was the best option to guarantee their new democracy.

In doing so, they opted, as so many do, for a chance at the lottery rather than the solid progress earned by virtue. Sadly, they have not won and the political lure conceals nasty economic surprises.

Confidence trick

FROM the Department of Co-incidental Statistics comes the news that the housing market is, indeed, on the up again. This is the same housing market that was going to hell in a hand-basket before the last Budget and needed massive government assistance. Now, we hear from the Halifax of "a gradually rising trend for the past six months". It appeals to the Government fail, you can always fall back on some recovery in confidence... a recovery that can always be stoked by news of rising house prices.

Gas-link design is overhauled after protests

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

WELSH WATER proposes to change its name to Hyder – Welsh for confidence – after the takeover of South Wales Electricity to form Britain's second super utility (Pennington, this page).

While the water and electricity businesses will continue to trade under their old names to avoid customer confusion, the entity that controls both will be Hyder. The super utility formed from North West Water and Norweb electricity was named United Utilities.

Welsh Water, which must secure shareholder approval for the change of name, said: "Welsh Water's philosophy is to provide a quality of infrastructure and service which earns the confidence of its customers."

Welsh Water's offer for Swalec became unconditional on Wednesday.

PLANS for a gas link between the UK and the Continent have been overhauled after a stream of protests in north Norfolk.

A planning application for the connection, which is being developed by a group of energy companies led by British Gas, provoked environmental anger with proposals to build surface works on farmland next to British Gas's plant at Bacton. The application was rejected by North Norfolk District Council.

The new scheme, which will go to the council today, involves building the terminal within British Gas's existing plant, so no extension of the gas complex will be necessary.

The interconnector consortium had originally ruled out such an option because it felt that the development could disturb the present pipeline

The High Court of Ireland

1996 No 8 Cos Ct 5

IN THE MATTER OF
LIFETIME ASSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED
AND IN THE MATTER OF
WINDSOR LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED
AND IN THE MATTER OF
THE ASSURANCE COMPANIES ACT 1909,
THE INSURANCE ACT 1989 AND THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (LIFE ASSURANCE)
FRAMEWORK REGULATIONS, 1994.

TAKE NOTICE that a Petition has been presented to the High Court of Ireland seeking the sanction by the Court under section 13 of the Assurance Companies Act 1909 of a Scheme for the transfer to Windsor Life Assurance Company Limited of the rights, powers, obligations and liabilities of Lifetime Assurance Company Limited under the policies of life assurance written by it through its United Kingdom branch and for other ancillary relief.

Copies of the Petition, the Scheme and actuaries' reports thereon (including a report by an independent actuary) may be inspected at the offices of Lifetime, the Bank of Ireland and Windsor Life set out below during their usual business hours from 5 February 1996 until 23 February 1996.

Dated the 2nd day of February 1996
McGann Fitzgerald, 2 Harbourmaster Place, Custom House Dock, Dublin 1
Solicitors for the directors of Lifetime (Ref:PAC)

A&J Goodbody, 1 Earlsfort Centre, Hatch Street, Dublin 2
Solicitors for the directors of Windsor Life (Ref:CLP)

Offices at which documents may be inspected:	Bank of Ireland:
Lifetime:	- 20/22 Berkeley Square, London
- c/o Bank of Ireland, 34 High Street, Slough	- 4 St Philip's Place, Birmingham
- Donegal House, 7 Donegal Square North, Belfast	- 35/41 John Dalton Street, Manchester
- Lifetime House, Earlsfort Centre, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2	- 41 Castle Street, Liverpool
- 67/69, South Mall, Cork	- 106 St Mary's Street, Cardiff
- Eyre Square Centre, Eyre Square, Galway	- Atles Chambers, King Street, Leeds
Celtech shares hit as Celltech scraps drug	- 65 St Vincent Street, Glasgow
Biotech shares hit as Celltech scraps drug	- Registration Department, Callender Street, Belfast
By ERIC REGULY	- 11/15 Strand Road, Derry, Co Derry
market leader in Ireland's £40 million a year tea market. Ireland has the highest per capita tea consumption in the world, at 32 kilograms a year.	- Stephen Street, Sligo, Co Sligo
Allied Domecq said that the sale formed part of its strategy to dispose of its food interests and brought disposals to £600 million in the past 18 months.	- 31 Church Street, Athlone, Co Westmeath
Unilever, whose chairman is Sir Michael Perry, also announced that it will buy AVCO, a Dutch cleaning systems supplier, for an undisclosed sum. AVCO has a turnover of £6 million.	- The Parade, Kilkenny, Co Kilkenny
Last month, Unilever spent £360 million on the acquisition of Diversy, a Canadian detergent producer.	- Spencer House, St James' Place, London - 60 The Quay, Waterford, Co Waterford
Lyons Irish Holdings is the	- 125 O'Connell Street, Limerick

Trade Indemnity succumbs to £177m takeover by French

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

TRADE INDEMNITY, the credit risk insurance company, yesterday agreed to accept a takeover bid worth £177.3 million from Compagnie Financière SFAC of France.

Commercial Union, the Guardian Royal Exchange, Munich Re and Swiss Re, which together own 53 per cent of Trade Indemnity, have accepted the 97p-a-share offer and can only change tack in the case of a higher offer, which analysts thought unlikely.

The terms represent a 33 per cent premium on the 73p closing share price on Wednesday. Trade Indemnity share-

holders will also get a second interim dividend of 14p a share. The company's shares rose 24p yesterday to close at 77p, matching the offer price.

The takeover would mean no leading export credit companies remaining in British hands. The Government sold the short-term operations of the Export Credits Guarantee Department to NMC, a Dutch company, in 1991. John Bishop, chief executive of Trade Indemnity, said: "We are not becoming French. We are creating a major international group. What is important is the quality of the service."

Mr Bishop said he hoped the expanded group would be

able to improve its ability to provide services to multinational clients, helped by the sharing of commercial data and the joint development of information technology.

Trade Indemnity would keep its own name, and Mr Bishop said he did not expect any job cuts. Compagnie Financière SFAC, the holding company, will have a new, "more international" name, he said. He will join the expanded group's executive committee, along with Paul-Henri Denieul, managing director of the French group, and Jean Lanier, its director-general.

Mr Bishop said he hoped the expanded group would be

Unilever in Irish tea deal

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

UNILEVER, the detergents and foods company, has continued its buying spree with the £78 million acquisition of the Irish arm of Lyons, the tea producer.

Unilever said that it was buying the 75 per cent stake in the company from Allied Domecq, the drinks company. A cash offer will be made for remaining shares at a similar price once the deal is complete.

The final price is dependent on a reduction for any dividend payments made by Lyons before the sale is finalised and a £3.8 million payment for Lyons Irish Enterprises, the holding company.

Lyons Irish Holdings is the



Perry: Dutch acquisition

role, in the heat of battle last month, to try to win support from institutional shareholders.

Instead, the meeting was a melancholy affair – and extremely short. Forte had booked the Dauphin Dubarry room on the sixth floor of the Café Royal, in central London. It obviously expected a big crowd; the cavernous space has a capacity of 450 and goes for a minimum of £4,000. The 30 or so shareholders who showed up, most of them elderly, looked lost among rows of empty seats. Sir Anthony, tall

and slightly stooped, shuffled up to the blue-felt podium and took his seat between David Stevens, legal director, and Alan Wheatley, a non-executive director. He seemed slightly embarrassed in the spotlights' glare.

Sir Anthony's speech was brief. In his soft-spoken manner, he told shareholders that Granda, the victor, now controlled the majority of Forte's shares and could do what it wanted. "Granda has wished the meeting to be adjourned," he said. "A poll on the resolution would be a waste of time..."

Forte celebration ends up as a wake

By ERIC REGULY

IT WAS supposed to be Forte's finest moment. When, on January 16, the company called an extraordinary general meeting to approve the sale of its roadside eateries to Whitbread, it was still confident that it could repel Granda's £3.8 billion hostile takeover offer. Yesterday's meeting would, in effect, have been a victory celebration. It was also supposed to be Sir Anthony Tennant's first appearance as chairman. Sir Rocco Forte ceded that

Airtours finds a lift as Carnival comes to town

STOCK MARKET investors are hoping Airtours can bring a bit of sun into their lives soon by confirming that the US Carnival Corporation has taken a near 30 per cent stake.

The Airtours share price crept 6p higher to 430p on turnover of 534,000 shares in a market where shares are normally quoted in parcels of 10,000. Whispers circulating in the Square Mile suggest an announcement is imminent.

Last month Airtours said it was in talks with Carnival about potential co-operation agreements. This followed months of speculation that Carnival was about to launch a full-scale bid for the fast-growing Airtours, which is Britain's second biggest package tour operator.

It now seems Carnival is prepared to take a 29.9 per cent stake in Airtours as well as agreeing co-operation agreements. The speculators claim Carnival is prepared to pay up to 500p a share for its holding, valuing the entire group at £576 million.

There was a muted response to confirmation of the overnight cut in US interest rates. Brokers said much of it was already in the price. The reluctance of the Bundesbank to cut German interest rates also depressed sentiment.

In the event, an opening fall in the Dow Jones industrial average left the FT-SE 100 Index nursing a fall of 6.5 points to 3,152.8 by the close. Total turnover reached 859 million, helped by further heavy dealing in Hanson, down 9p to 1934p, where another 52 million shares changed hands.

Reed International dropped 24p to 10.12 despite a denial of a profits downgrading from the company's broker, ABN Amro House Gove.

Persistent bid speculation lifted Yorkshire Electricity a further 17p to 736p, for a two-day gain of 52p. There is talk of a bid of 800p a share from West Coast, the US utility group, valuing Yorkshire at £1.2 billion.

The news that Celltech had abandoned further trials of CDP 840, its asthma treatment, after disappointing results from a series of Phase 2a studies sent the share price plumping 163p to 518p. The test had been carried out jointly with Merck, the US pharmaceutical group, its partner in the venture. The tests concluded



ERF tumbled after giving warning on full-year profits

the treatment did not reach the level of effectiveness required and has saddled Celltech with milestone payments and royalties of £31.5 million.

The fall-out from Celltech hurt the other biotechnology shares with Cantab Pharmaceuticals down 35p to 470p, Chiroscience 15p to 284p, and Chiroscience International 22p to

35p to 391p.

ERF Holdings tumbled

60p to 182p after warning that a setback in second-half profit

6578 million and for 1997 from £63 million to £738 million.

Other brokers had begun cutting their forecasts in the new year, worried by the impact of the increased competition and the petrol price war. J Sainsbury was down

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**THE
TIMES**
**CITY
DIARY**

**Crash worries
Wall Street**

SORRY to shock you while the Dow Jones hits fresh highs, but there has been a nasty crash affecting Wall Street.

"Charging Bull", the 7,000lb 16-foot statue by Arturo Di Modica, so loved by market folk and which, until 1989, was sited in front of the New York Stock Exchange, has been cruelly struck by a station wagon and damaged.

Traders, fearing portents, are aghast that the statue, relocated on Broadway, was knocked 7ft south of its moorings and that the bull's front hoof has been put out of joint.

A New York policeman noted that had "Charging Bull" been pushed just a few more inches, "a steel stanchion would have downsized the animal's manhood".

The driver, who was unharmed but whose car bumper was demolished, said his brakes failed.

Flowers have been laid at the plinth to wish the bull, and the market, better.



Parc life blur

THE night with analysis held by Scottish & Newcastle at its CenterParties village in Wiltshire (yesterday's City Diary) turned out to be some fun after all. A mystery voice tells us it was so good that after a 4am finish, 13 missed their morning train back to London, ten missed their luncheon train, and one senior S&N man was thought to have been face down in a ditch. My (sober) contact assures me "I did learn a lot about the group". The shares rose 10p to 644p.

Bloomin' error

WHEN your bank sends flowers, you know their mistake is serious. A trainee at a City law firm was somewhat non-plussed to receive a rather down-market bunch of cream and peach carnations from her bank manager at Barclays. "Quite revolting," was her response. Even worse, the skinny bouquet arrived at work for all to see. The card read: "We apologise for the standing order error." Some error! She couldn't get access to her funds for three weeks, which is 20 days longer than the flowers are likely to last.

In the swim

THE Lord Mayor of London, a keen swimmer, is calling on as many as possible to take part in a City Dip. The Corporation of London's annual charity swim takes place at the Golden Lane recreation centre, Golden Lane, on March 1 and 2, in aid of the St John Ambulance Brigade. City teams are welcome. Last year, the event raised £7,000.

Knockdown?

AFTER British Coal's lengthy search for a buyer for CINMAZ, its pension fund management business, hit a brick wall yesterday, the pressure will be on to find a quick fix. The company, which has steadily been selling off assets since privatisation, will be without a home from July — the date of a demolition order on its headquarters.

COLIN CAMPBELL



Training ground: if the Railtrack flotation in May is successful, the scope for putting privatisation into reverse will largely disappear

A method is emerging from 'madness' of the rail gamble

**As the first privately owned trains begin operating,
Jonathan Prynne sees cause for cautious optimism**

This afternoon Chris Kinchin-Smith will attend the last board meeting of LTS Rail, the British Rail subsidiary that runs commuter trains between London's Fenchurch Street, Southend and Tilbury.

Later in the day, John Welsh, the BR chairman, will give a short talk at Southend, wishing him and his colleagues the best of luck in the brave new world of the privatised railways.

When the GSS pulls out of Sheerness bound for London in the pre-dawn of Sunday morning it will be the first privately operated scheduled train on the line for more than 49 years.

It will miss the record books by 20 minutes as the 5.10 from Twickenham, operated by South West Trains, qualifies as the first privatised train in the country. Nevertheless, it will be an emotional moment for Mr Kinchin-Smith, who has headed LTS through the most turbulent three years on the railways for half a century.

Mr Kinchin-Smith is fusing ideas about how to transform the service once known as the "misery line" — radio communication between every driver and the control centre at Upminster, credit-card ticket machines, even a satellite "global positioning system" so that every train on the line can be located to the centimetre.

Autonomy gives him and his team freedom to experiment, while his personal financial commitment to the buyout means that far more, than his next promotion is on the line if the franchise does not perform. In his hands and those of the other first franchise heads rests the future of the Government's boldest privatisation.

Privatisation remains a huge political gamble. It completely makes it a mystery to all but a handful of officials, politicians and City folk, and a sitting duck for its opponents. Few, if any, benefits have yet flowed through to the travelling public, though they are all too well aware of the absurdities. The railway industry subsidy has doubled. It could still prove the disastrously wrong sort of privatisation.

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huge political gamble. Its complexity makes it a mystery to all but a handful of officials, politicians and City folk, and a sitting duck for its opponents. Few, if any, benefits have yet flowed through to the travelling public, though they are all too well aware of the absurdities. The railway industry subsidy has doubled. It could still prove the disastrously wrong sort of privatisation.

Investment plans that could see a transformation of chronically underfunded lines like the London-Tilbury and Southend over the next decade, have been drawn up and costed. Proper financial accountability is being established for the first time since privatisation. Performance contracts set up to provide incentives for the train operators and Railtrack that will determine whether privatisation is judged a success or failure.

The detailed thinking that

has gone into the new structure is astonishing: for example, every time a passenger train anywhere in the country

falls three minutes behind its scheduled timetable, a mini-inquiry is automatically triggered and "blame" for the delay attributed to the responsible party.

If the operator is found guilty, passengers benefit through lower ticket prices. If Railtrack is to blame, the operators received a rebate on access charges. It sounds like a lawyers' paradise, but the system's architects are adamant it will work. Perhaps.

This year is the crunch. Although 32 former BR companies have already been sold off, raising more than £2 billion, it is the performance of the train operators and Railtrack that will determine whether privatisation is judged a success or failure.

The three franchises being launched this weekend, LTS Rail, Great Western (both awarded to management teams) and South West Trains (won by Stagecoach), will be

followed by four more in June, another two in September and at least two more later in the autumn. If ScotRail can resolve its problems with the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority, a total of 12 out of the 25 franchises representing perhaps two-thirds of passenger revenue, will have been handed over to private operators by the end year.

Railtrack is due to go to the stock market in May. For all Labour's attempts to intimidate the City and scupper the sale, the chances are that it will get underway. To pull this at stage would be a political disaster of unthinkable magnitude.

Once the flotation is up, Railtrack is the keystone of privatisation and once in the hands of millions of private investors, the sell-off will become a legal and financial nightmare to dismantle.

A range of policy ideas is still being considered by Clare Short, the Shadow Transport Secretary, although the range of options is rapidly narrowing.

John Prescott, deputy prime minister, who has headed a committee looking at railway policy, is said to favour taking back Railtrack into public ownership in reverse public style — slice by slice — in return for subsidy.

If it succeeds, privatisation will deliver higher levels of investment, private/public sector partnership, "stakeholder" employee share ownership and improved public services after 50 years of underperformance — all Labour's aims.

The case for yet

another round of upheaval in an industry that has suffered permanent revolution for the past decade would be untenable.

The proposal begs questions: How would the Government buy back the shares? In the market, forcing up their value like a hostile takeover bidder? By making Railtrack issue new stock, diluting the value of small shareholders, including thousands of employees? And why would the Government want to pay twice, once in subsidy and again for equity?

A similar Labour plan to take over the National Grid, thereby restoring government "control" to the electricity industry, was floated and eventually ditched before the 1992 election. Labour will argue that Railtrack is different because it will be the only subsidised private utility.

Simon Raynsford, Chairman, 1st February 1996



Prescott favours return to public ownership

Companies will only grow if treated as customers by DTI

From R.J. Jackson

Sir, In today's fiercely contested markets, the constant drive to improve competitiveness is engraved in our minds. Having survived a very severe recession, an achievement in itself, as manufacturers we well understand the need to be responsive to market conditions and to be both efficient and flexible in our operating methods.

Whilst benchmarking may provide useful targets for some small manufacturers to aim at, the vast majority of us will struggle to find their programmes are prescriptive or inappropriate and immersed in bureaucracy.

The DTI would do well to

act on the hard lessons we have learnt. So we trust that in the third White Paper announced by Mrs Heseltine, the DTI will be more responsive to manufacturers' needs by introducing both practical and flexible measures which will encourage more of us to achieve promotion to "world class".

Yours faithfully,

R.J. JACKSON,

Director,

South London Manufacturers Forum;

Managing director,

H.W. Wallace,

172 St James's Road,

Croydon.

Yours faithfully,

MARK PEARSON,

Director,

Independent Pilots Association;

Old Rectory,

The Priory,

Haywards Heath,

West Sussex.

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The Priory,

Haywards Heath,

West Sussex.

Yours faithfully,

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Oil and gas output at ten-year record

BY MARTIN BARROW

BRITAIN'S oil and gas production reached its highest level last year, according to the Royal Bank of Scotland's oil and gas index.

Oil output grew 2 per cent during the year to the highest level for more than a decade. Average daily production reached 2.54 million barrels per day (bpd), just below the previous highest level of 2.59 million barrels, which was reached in 1985. During the

year as a whole the UK's North Sea oilfields produced 927 million barrels, equivalent to 360 gallons for every man, woman and child in Britain.

Britain's gas output rose even faster, increasing by 8 per cent to a record high. This was achieved despite subdued gas demand for heating for much of the year.

The upsurge in output was assisted by the growth in demand from new gas-fired

power stations and because of the extremely cold period in December. Gas production during the month was 34 per cent higher than one year ago, helped also by the availability of cheap gas supplies.

Mark Shea, the Royal Bank's energy economist, said: "These figures confirm the success of the oil industry in using new lower cost technologies, which make it possible to develop successfully the new smaller fields."

They also reflect the success of the industry in extending the life of existing fields and recovering a much higher proportion of their overall reserves than was originally thought possible. I believe that this success will continue and that we will see further production increases both this year and next."

The index shows that North Sea oil output was down again in January by nearly 39,000 bpd to an average 2.62 million bpd. But gas production rose again to the highest level since the index was launched in 1991.

VOLATILE oil prices, caused by the cold snap and short stock position in northern Europe, underpinned a record month of trading on the International Petroleum Exchange in London in January (writes Martin Barrow).

A total of 1.69 million contracts were traded, an increase of 16 per cent over the previous high set in November 1993. This represents the

equivalent of 77 million barrels per day, compared to total world oil consumption and production of 70 million barrels per day.

Brent crude oil futures traded almost 1.1 million contracts last month, an increase of 10 per cent over the previous record set in January 1995 and the first time that more than one million contracts have been traded in a single month.



FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD. FIVE GLORIOUS POUNDS.

You can eat out up to fourteen times at any of 350 of the finest restaurants in the country for just £5. What's more, from February 12 until the end of March, you can take up to five friends with you. Each restaurant has been chosen from either The Michelin, AA Best Restaurant or Good Food guides. For details and your first token in tomorrow's Times Magazine, Box office.

CHANGING TIMES



Sales raise interim at Peter Black

PETER BLACK, the toiletries and cosmetics company that supplies Marks and Spencer, achieved an 8.1 per cent increase in profits in the first half of the current year (Martin Barrow writes).

At the pre-tax level profits eased to £8.2 million from £8.4 million in the six months to December 2, although comparable results for the previous year included a £527,800 surplus from the sale of a discontinued operation.

Group turnover was almost unchanged at £69.3 million, compared with £69.9 million, but like-for-like sales were up 6.8 per cent. Net margins on continuing businesses increased to 11.8

per cent from 10.9 per cent. Gordon Black chairman said: "We remain confident that the current progressive trend can be maintained."

The interim dividend rises 8.7 per cent to 13.7p a share from 12.0p, to be paid April 30. Earnings were 10.13p a share (9.52p). The shares rose 3p to 27.5p.

ICI plans expansion and jobs

BY OUR BUSINESS STAFF

ICI is to invest £60 million in building a new melamine polyester film plant alongside its existing plants at Dumfries, creating 50 permanent jobs in the area and a further 200 during construction.

The plant will add an extra 20,000 tonnes a year to the company's existing world capacity of more than 100,000 tonnes. The plant should come on stream during 1997 and will mainly supply the packaging industry.

Separately, ICI has agreed an outsourcing deal worth more than £75 million over five years with Origin involving about 400 staff in the UK and Holland.

Origin, in which Philips Communications has an 82 per cent interest, will take over ICI's mainframe and legacy applications and management of some other mid-range systems, together with ICI's data centres at Runcorn, Cheshire and in Rozenburg in The Netherlands.

The agreement involves two ICI divisions — ICI Systems and TASC Telecoms and Systems Computing, which manages ICI's mainframe computing.

Profits warning rocks ERF shares

BY MARTIN BARROW

SHARES in ERF Holdings, one of Britain's last surviving independent truck manufacturers, fell to a three-year low yesterday after the company gave warning that annual profits would be significantly below current forecasts.

ERF said that, despite a strong first half, order intake slowed markedly in December and January, forcing it to introduce short-time working at its plants. Industry analysts estimate that demand for trucks has declined by about 40 per cent since the autumn. Shares in ERF fell to 182p from 342p after the announcement, with pre-tax profit forecasts downgraded to just £1.6 million for the year to March 31, compared with the £2.3 million profit reported in the previous 12 months. The City had previously expected profits of about £2.6 million.

ERF said, however, that order intake has seen some recovery and the export business continues to improve, particularly in Africa.

Separately, the company is seeking alternative and additional sources of term finance, with new arrangements expected to be in place within a few months.

Its principal banker has indicated that overdraft facilities are available to March 31, 1997, and a medium-term loan of £4 million repayable in January 1998. The profit warning was accompanied by details of a restructuring of the company's interests in South Africa:

Dorbyl, a South African engineering company, is to take a 70 per cent interest in ERF South Africa (ERFSA), acquiring shares from the country's Industrial Development Corporation and the management. ERF's interest will fall from 56.1 per cent to 30 per cent.

Harrison buys US company

BY OUR CITY STAFF

HARRISONS & Crosfield, the chemicals and building materials company, has acquired Daniel Products, an American specialty chemicals company, for about \$30 million.

Daniel, based in New Jersey, develops and manufactures pigments and other chemicals used in paints and coatings. The company claims particular expertise in environmentally friendly waterborne and high solids content products.

In 1994 the company earned profits of \$3.1 million before interest and tax on turnover of \$24.3 million. About 30 per cent of sales are destined for markets outside the US.

H&C said its international position would help Daniel to generate more sales, while it would gain from the acquired group's technological expertise. Bill Turcan, chief executive, said further acquisitions were possible.

Ocean sells control of laboratories

BY OUR CITY STAFF

OCEAN GROUP, the industrial and distribution services company, will incur a £29 million charge after selling a majority interest in NET, its American environmental testing business, to its managers.

NET's laboratories provide analytical services to industry and public authorities. It has suffered because of a decline in demand for its services, after a reduction in federal support, resulting in intense price competition. In the first half, NET lost £800,000, following a loss of £2.8 million after exceptional costs for all of 1994.

The management buy-out team is led by David Casperson, president of NET. Ocean has sold 60 per cent of NET's equity for nominal consideration. Ocean has also provided in full against its remaining investment and for guarantees. This provision, of £16.5 million, is in addition to £16.5 million of goodwill previously written off to reserves upon acquisition.

Australia buys on BankWest's debut

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

THE Bank of Scotland received an overwhelming seal of approval from Australian investors yesterday as shares in BankWest, its new acquisition, soared to a 26 per cent premium on its first day of trading on the Australian stock exchange.

Shares in BankWest, in which Bank of Scotland retains a 51 per cent controlling stake, rose 53 cents to A\$2.58 (£1.27), with more than 38 million shares changing hands. Ian Mackenzie, chairman of BankWest, said: "I think the public demand for the stock reflects the confidence brought by the anchor shareholder, which has a great deal of expertise and experience in banking."

Yesterday's rise in BankWest shares, which was

far greater than analysts had expected, values Bank of Scotland's stake, which it acquired for a net A\$462 million (£229 million), at more than A\$30 million.

The Bank of Scotland, which agreed to sell down 49 per cent of BankWest when it acquired the bank from the Western Australian government in December, had been forced to close the public share offer more than three weeks early and scale back allocations in the face of overwhelming demand.

Fraser Campbell, Bank of Scotland's general manager for Australasian operations, said BankWest had produced outstanding results in the past few years and was now clearly one of the best performing banks in Australia.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST PRICES														
Sec	Buy	-	Wk	Sec	Buy	-	Wk	Sec	Buy	-	Wk			
AM UNIT TRUST MANAGERS LTD				FRANKLIN UNIT TRUST LTD				JAPAN UNIT TRUST LTD						
07171 503 103	206.38	210.38	- 0.70	0.21	07171 503 103	163.95	+ 0.16	2.4	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92		
Central Area				Cassion Portfolio	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side One	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92	
Greater London	65.50	65.10	- 0.40	0.20	American Portfolio	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Two	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
London City	65.50	65.10	- 0.40	0.20	High Income	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Three	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
Grosvenor Regt Dist	131.10	125.50	- 0.60	5.12	Investment Portfolio	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Four	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
Grand Total	77.30	79.60	- 0.20	4.65	Income Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Five	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
Global Fund	92.25	92.25	- 0.00	0.00	International	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Six	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Income Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Seven	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Div	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Eight	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Nine	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Ten	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Eleven	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twelve	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Thirteen	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Fourteen	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Fifteen	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Sixteen	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Seventeen	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Eighteen	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Nineteen	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twenty	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twenty-one	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twenty-two	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twenty-three	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twenty-four	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twenty-five	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twenty-six	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twenty-seven	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twenty-eight	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Twenty-nine	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Thirty	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Thirty-one	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Thirty-two	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Thirty-three	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
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High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Forty	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Forty-one	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.40	21.40	- 0.00	0.00	Investment Fund	07171 503 103	174.95	+ 0.05	0.05	East Side Forty-two	07171 503 103	126.50	+ 2.10	1.92
High Income & Inv	21.													



■ VISUAL ART

Francis Bacon by himself: an unknown self-portrait goes on show for the first time



■ THEATRE 1

A musical set on Death Row? Yes, *Fields of Ambrosia* is as ghastly as it sounds



■ THEATRE 2

... but young Nick Grosso's Sweetheart delves subtly into a world of loveless bed-hopping



■ MUSIC

Fearless and triumphant: Thomas Quasthoff impresses in a challenging Wigmore recital

How good is the early self-portrait by Francis Bacon that has come to light after 66 years? And where was it found?

Face to face with young genius?

The discovery, announced yesterday, of an early self-portrait by Francis Bacon, who died in 1992, is undoubtedly a major event. The artist made sure that few of the pictures he painted before 1944, when he was 35, have survived. In that decisive year, Bacon completed his first triptych — the enormously disturbing *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, now in the Tate.

Much of the work he produced before then was destroyed by the artist. Indeed, only 14 of the pictures Bacon painted prior to the triptych are reproduced in Ronald Alley's catalogue raisonné of the artist's œuvre. They give a desperately fragmented idea of his youthful development, and not one is a painted self-portrait.

That is what makes this new discovery so valuable. The painting is probably identifiable as the self-portrait Bacon exhibited in his studio, with a substantial 45 guineas price-tag, in November 1930. Painted on a canvas board with pinholes in the corners, it is a small work but surprisingly powerful.

Viewed in near-silhouette against a pale, freely brushed background, Bacon's purplish face looks like a boxer's after a bruising fight. His nose seems flattened. Both eyes appear narrowed to the point of closure, reduced to little more than slits. His cheeks look raw, and his lower lip strangely swollen.

But the pummeled state of his flesh, possibly painted in part with his fingers, does not mean that the portrait lacks vitality. On the contrary, the eyebrows rise up in broad strokes, giving his face the exuberant vigour of a clown in full make-up. Anarchic humour always played a vital role in Bacon's outlook, and the centre-parted hair springs out, to left and right, with irreverent dynamism. Crude it may be compared with his later technical sophistication. But the energy is there in awesome abundance, and so is the readiness to twist a human face like rubber.

How does this discovery tally with the early Bacons that we already know? Some are Cubist studies of Painted Screens, showing the kind of elegant decorative work produced by Bacon when he launched himself, around 1930, as an interior decorator and furniture designer. *The Studio*, an influential art magazine, reproduced several photographs of his Queenberry Mews studio in London. Here, against cool white walls, the 21-year-old Bacon displayed Cubist wall-hangings, abstract rugs and gleaming metal tables and chairs.

They all proclaimed his allegiance to the modern movement, and testified to his precocious talents as a designer. And indeed, for a while, Bacon prospered in that trade. R.A. Butler commissioned him to design furnishings for his dining room.

But even at this stage, Bacon's real ambition was to succeed as a painter. Entirely self-taught, he always claimed that art school would have destroyed his individuality. In these early years, though, Bacon's lack of professional training made him feel curiously uncertain about his ability.

We will never know how many pictures he produced during the 1930s, but one in particular stands out: a Crucifixion painted in 1933 for the leading collector Sir Michael Sadler. After buying an earlier picture from Bacon, Sadler had sent him an X-ray photograph of his skull from which to paint his portrait. Bacon placed the skull next to a figure of Christ hanging from an invisible cross, one half of his body painted in searing scarlet.

No such colour envenoms the newly discovered self-portrait. Nevertheless, it shows that Bacon was already prepared, even at this early stage, to take astonishing and even alarming liberties with anatomy. The wonder is that he took so long to develop fully the uncompromising vision announced here with such raw, embryonic strength.

RICHARD CORK

• Bacon's energy is there in awesome abundance



The newly revealed self-portrait: Bacon apparently kept it secretly for five decades and then gave it to a friend in the early 1980s

Portrait of a discovery

It was only through perseverance that the art writer Angus Stewart found Bacon's early self-portrait. As curator of the Francis Bacon and Henry Moore exhibition at next month's Fine Art and Antiques Fair at Olympia, Stewart was doing research for the show when he traced the unknown work, painted in 1930.

"I knew there was a possibility of its existence, but Bacon hacked so much of his work to pieces you could never be sure that anything existed," says Stewart, who knew the artist over a period of 30 years. "When I managed to locate the catalogue for the November 1930 exhibition he held in his London studio, which lists a self-portrait, it made me wonder."

"In fact I thought I'd found one: but it turned out I was wrong. But I kept on; I was trying to find different things for this exhibition. I just kept looking and looking and looking. I continued to talk to people who said they knew nothing until eventually someone owned up."

The painting had been given by the artist's present owner — a close friend of Bacon's — in the early Eighties. According to Stewart, it had been in Bacon's possession for the previous 50 years, although the artist was obviously not keen for the world to know of its existence. "When he was co-operating with Ronald Alley on the catalogue he edited in 1964 of Bacon's works at the Tate, the artist didn't mention it. He always maintained that his early works had been destroyed. I caught him out in telling another fib."

Twenty years later Bacon thought well enough of the self-portrait to give it away. "People who own a Bacon painting have a very deep relationship with it. Certainly in this particular case the owner was a friend of Bacon's; it was a gift which was very personal to him and he didn't broadcast the fact of his ownership."

"In the end he volunteered and brought the painting back into this country and said 'if you want it you can exhibit it'. It was an amazing kindness on his part. When I actually saw the painting, I was boggled. It was an amazing thing to see, a remarkable work."

The small self-portrait, measuring 15½in by 11in, will go on show to the public for six days from February 27 at the Olympia fair. After that it will be returned to its owner, who, adds Stewart, has no intention of selling it.

DEBRA CRANE

THEATRE: Well-crafted study of the unwillingly promiscuous; musical about an executioner in shockingly bad taste

Men misbehaving badly

Sweetheart
Royal Court Upstairs

Nick Grosso's award-winning first play, *Peaches*, enjoyable traces the misfortunes of a group of lads who wanted to think they were having success with women but patently weren't. The 20-year-olds in his new piece are managing the sex all right but the love part of it, and this troubles them more than they expected.

Lee's girlfriend Jane left him a year ago — for a man of 30, almost a pensioner — and he can't stop thinking of her. Davey has met a woman he does not instantly want to take to bed, because if something more serious is possible he would not want to upset his chances.

Charlie, the sweetheart of the title mucks up his long-lasting love affair with Toni, but the memory of what he has lost spoils his nights with her successors.

Charlie is the one whose bed-hopping adventures Grosso shows us in a sequence of scenes across London with the postal districts flashed on to the rear wall. He chats up Ruby at a club in NW1; lolls on her bed in NW8; goes to NW6 to argue with Toni; meets Davey in NW3.

The easy-flowing talk is totally convincing, with its repetitions and peppering of one-word sentences. Speeches of more than two sentences are rare. Yet this is a formalised dialogue, ingeniously bringing facts and feeling out of the chitchat.

The play is beautifully acted too, with a fine sense of the cautious sussing-out that goes on when a couple are on the verge of becoming better acquainted but aren't yet sure they want to be.

entiment seething beneath the charm.

Most of the people he meets work in television, and Grosso makes him say that people have to watch television in order to find out what it's like, and should therefore do the same with life. Blocked by this "therefore" he can do nothing but drift.

Grosso never patronises his characters. Davey (Darren Tighe), as ill-informed about the wider world as Charlie, deranges more epithets than anyone since Mrs Malaprop, but the comedy is affectionate. With this subtilly structured 90-minute piece Grosso clears the hurdle of the second play, where so many young writers stumble.

JEREMY KINGSTON

THIS American musical isn't quite another "Springtime for Hitler", though there were moments in the first scene when I thought it might be. That is when an executioner called Jonas lures a podgy, bewildered boy into his sticky electric chair, mesmerises him with talk of the nectar and the women he will find in the next life, keeps up the comforting chamer as he straps his limbs and jams a steel hand over his head, then throws the switch.

"Oh, the fields of ambrosia," everyone cheerfully sings, as half-masked by a chorus of clean-living Southern ladies and gents, the lad passes happily to Kingdom Come.

Probably we have too many feel-good shows in London right now. That does not necessarily mean we want a feel-gassy or feel-prety-sickened one. It could, I guess, be argued that Sondheim took risks with taste in *Sweeney Todd*; but he was wittily

dried males to their Maker, falls for his first female victim.

Consider what happens when Jonas, played by Higgins himself, tries to delay her death by hiding Old Reliable, as he calls his chair. Suspicious guards set on the assembled convicts, viciously beating and torturing and gouging out their eyes while the executioner has a gleeful sex with Christine Andreas's Gretchen on a platform above. Or consider the scene in which the local mortician, a forlorn wimp whose smell of formaldehyde puts off women, keeps watch while scores of prisoners are off copulating with six exhausted whores. Grabbed and raped by homosexual convicts, he launches into a soaring sob-song that begins "If it ain't one thing it's another".

How on earth to make such stuff palatable? Higgins and Silvestri's solution is to give them a show a folksy, jokey, aw-shucks feeling, supposedly in keeping with the period, which is 1918. No wonder they have problems assimilating the episode in which Gretchen prowls a cage festooned with men singing "hungry for you", or the one in which the chief warden incants "I figure your ass is too good to fry" and sexually assaults her.

Oddy, there is genuine talent on display. Silvestri can turn a breezy country tune. Higgins the librettist may have his limitations, but Higgins the actor has lots of laid-back assurance, and Andreas has a fine, pure voice. Yet if it is easy to see why both principals have strong Broadway credits, it is hard to understand why they are over here. What next — a hanging, gassing, shooting or lethal-injection show? A new genre beckons: the Terminal Follies.

HILARY FINCH

• Valerie Grove interviews Thomas Quasthoff, page 14

Heart and voice of solid oak

THOMAS QUASTHOFF began and ended his London debut recital, fearlessly and uncompromisingly, at the end. It takes a brave man to start with Schubert's big three heavyweights, *Gärtner und Prometheus*, *Der Mensch und Prometheus*, and *Der Tod und das Mädchen* as his final encore. But Quasthoff is clearly a man of determination, and both his temperament and his voice, a sturdy oak of a bass-baritone, seemed ideally suited to these songs.

Later he was to tackle the equally daunting dramas of Richard Strauss, in *Zueignung*, *Heimliche Aufforderung*, and *Die Nacht*, found a true soul mate in

ESPECIAL
Thomas Quasthoff
Wigmore Hall

no half measures. And yet Quasthoff's voice — one of grainy strength rather than any particular natural beauty — does not always touch the raw nerve of the listener, however powerfully it flexes its muscles.

A heavy, thick-textured voice needs, perhaps, to project individual words with even closer focus, particularly in Schubert, whose includes and rhythms are so minutely verbally activated.

In songs such as *Der Zwerg* and *Der Wanderer*, where the piano accompaniment plays such a crucial part in stage-management, Quasthoff was not helped by Charles Spencer's less than meticulously imagined playing. One longed for a great subtlety of both timbre and movement: Quasthoff's voice, more of the earth than of the air, nevertheless found its way into the spirit of *Der Musensohn* rather more nimbly than Spencer's fingers did.

Although this programme gave him little chance to show it, there is also, I suspect, a droll humour lurking somewhere there, and it surfaced delightfully in Hugo Wolf's *Storchenbotschaft*, the song of the storks' visitation to the shepherd: a nod, a curtsey, and off they fly.

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■ POP 1

A class act on twin tracks: how Gemini are spreading a little melody in our schools



■ POP 2

Babylon Zoo follow their astounding single with an equally fine new album



■ POP 3

... while Nick Cave presents a chilling disc of Gothic melodrama on *Murder Ballads*



■ POP 4

... and Marion, five Mancunians, make a fine album debut with *This World and Body*

Alan Jackson joins chart wannabes Gemini on a groundbreaking gig – at a school in the Midlands

Extra lessons in screaming

It is a cold, wet Wednesday afternoon in Wolverhampton, and lingering in the corridors of Deansfield High is the faint but unmistakable smell of school dinners only recently served. All around us is clean and polished, and the passing teenager flagged down for directions to the Head's office proves to be a model of politeness.

It is not an environment which immediately says to you "showbusiness". Yes, the pupils are in rehearsal for a forthcoming production of *The Mikado*, but this would not be the first place you would think of looking for the next Take That or Boyzone.

Which – today at least – would be a mistake. In the assembly hall it may be time for the weekly PSE (Personal and Social Education) programme, but on offer is not a reprise of the last highlight, a question-and-answer session with the Samaritans. The rows of shuffling, fidgeting girls and determinedly uninterested boys are here to cast their verdict on teen pop's latest wannabes – Gemini, identical twins David and Michael Smallwood, 21, all smouldering looks and razor-sharp cheekbones on the cover of their latest single, *Steal Your Love Away*.

"The idea of doing a schools tour came to me back in 1991 when I was promoting Take That," says the duo's manager, Carolyn Norman. "It was in the days before they had a record deal, and I was looking for ways of building them a fan base. We'd tried doing a *Tiffany* [America's youth sensation of 1988, all but forgotten by 1990] and playing the shopping malls, but it was a bit of an embarrassment for the lads – you could never get the sound right, and people were too busy doing their shopping to take much notice."

A club tour wasn't right either – the punters are there to dance or to meet friends so aren't interested in paying attention to a bunch of hopefuls. We needed something new and exciting, something that would allow us to hit that sector of the youth market that actually does go out and spend its money on singles – and this was it. Not that we were ran away from the band down children's throats and saying 'Get the record, or else...' It was just a matter of taking the opportunity to in-



Gemini rising: David and Michael Smallwood meet and greet their public after an SRO gig at Deansfield High School in Wolverhampton

introduce the boys to a contained audience and saying: "Well, here they are and this is what they do. What do you think?"

It all makes good business sense, but where is the educational value in a four-song performance by a fleshy, pouting Gemini? Hugh Howe, head of Deansfield and its 500 pupils, has a plausible explanation.

"We're trying to raise achievement levels in a school where many of our youngsters come from backgrounds where unemployment, housing and general lack of facilities are an issue," he says. "But more fundamentally, we're about trying to raise aspirations."

Three girls in Year Ten performed to invite them here, and I thought that it would be useful for our 13 and 14-year-olds to have the chance to see two other young people who themselves are aspiring to move forward and make their way through the complex dance routines de rigueur at

saying that this is the career path they too should follow. We're just saying look, listen, ask questions and see what you can learn. It's what PSE is all about – broadening pupils' horizons, challenging some of their assumptions about themselves and the world around them. And, of course, there's been a great buzz in school because it involves a pop group."

Back in the assembly hall, it's ready, steady and go for Gemini in their bid to capture the pocket money vote. Against backtracking, usually distorted by the predictably dodgy acoustics, they sing their single-covered hearts out, all the while twisting and turning their way through the complex dance routines de rigueur at

this end of the pop market. Initially coy, the girls in the audience soon remember how to scream:

"They're sex on legs," is the joint conclusion of Kelly Hopkins and Kathy Jones. "Good singers, great bodies – far better than Take That," chime in Katrina Hyde and Michelle Aris. In the row behind, a male classmate viewing the proceedings from behind Joe 90-style specs opines with all due sagacity: "Very professional presentation, very good songs." Ah! So he'll be buying the Gemini single?

After a Paxman-esque grilling from the floor ("What's your favourite football team?" "Have you got a girlfriend?" "What's the best way to tell

you apart?") and a lengthy autograph-signing session which finds some newly minted girl fans coming around for a second or even a third time, the twins retire gratefully to an empty classroom. Yes, they acknowledge, for every Wham! there's a score of failures. "So it's a risky business," says Michael. "But even to get to the stage we're at now, first with a publishing deal as songwriters, then with a recording deal as artists, is an achievement."

David adds: "OK, so the percentage of boy groups who actually get deals here to make it as big as Take That is small. But never mind. We'll just do our best and be as successful as we can be."

"They're such nice, ordinary lads, magnificent at dealing with the kids," is the verdict of Ken Gilkes, the staff member in charge of Deansfield's entertainments programme and hence the man lobbied by the school's three original Gemini

fans, Joanne Till, Clare Wiley and Vicki Summers.

Norman, who has also been involved in the careers of Bad Boys Inc, Let Loose and Right Said Fred, says: "I can't say exactly why I wanted them to be the first band I managed, other than that I got the most horrendous butterflies in my stomach the first time I saw them perform. They're stars even before they've got started. They're nice guys, they're absolutely stunning to look at – and they're talented. Which, at the end of the day, is what counts."

So even though, right now, Gemini are climbing into the back of a van in a wet Wolverhampton school playground, that doesn't mean they're no-hoppers. This is what it takes nowadays to break a teen band – and they've got them all. If anyone deserves Deansfield's spending money, it's these two.

• *Steal Your Love Away* is available now on EMI

Jean genie shakes off the jean jinx

NEW ALBUMS: Babylon Zoo are shooting for the moon

BABYLON ZOO
The Boy with the X-Ray Eyes
(EMI 7243 8 37204)

THE phenomenal success of Babylon Zoo's first single, *Spaceman*, which registered the biggest one-week sale in this country since Band Aid's *Do They Know It's Christmas?*, has not entirely laid to rest doubts about the group's long-term viability. Still looming in the wings is the spectre of Stiltskin, who enjoyed a similarly explosive hit thanks to a Lewis advertisement in 1994, and promptly sank without trace.

However, with the arrival of Babylon Zoo's debut album, *The Boy with the X-Ray Eyes*, such worries may confidently be set aside. Written, played, sung and co-produced by 24-year-old Jas Mann from Wolverhampton, it is a credible and cohesive collection of songs which harnesses a big, distorted guitar sound to a futuristic vision that is more lunar than Britpop.

Spaceman, a good-natured chronicle of space-age fear and loathing set to an unforgettable chorus, has clearly struck a chord in the Britain of the late 1990s and already has the sound of a pop classic. And, while Mann's glam-rock influences are clear – a sort of Bowie-meets-Stade amalgamation – adapted for the post-grunge era – he has the wit to convert them into something identifiably his own and to carry the torch forward.

The mechanical-sounding production results in a lack of swing, but Mann, skilfully plays the angles on a narrow defined patch, weaving together dense layers of guitars on *Zodiac Sign*, conjuring a melodic mood on *Caffeine* and hitting the jackpot with the surging, Beatles-derived melody of the title track.

At his most arch, he sounds like a poor man's Brett Ander-



Missing the boat? Marion have finally released their album but will not play live again until March

TOP TEN ALBUMS

1. (*What's the Story*) Morning Glory? ... Oasis (Creation)
2. Jagged Little Pill ... Alanis Morissette (Maverick)
3. Different Class ... Pulp (Island)
4. Boys for Pele ... Tori Amos (East West)
5. Robson & Jerome ... Robson & Jerome (RCA)
6. HiStory ... Michael Jackson (Epic)
7. Something to Remember ... Madonna (Maverick)
8. All Change ... Cast (Polydor)
9. CrazySexyCool ... TLC (LaFace)
10. The Bands ... Radiohead (Parlophone)

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and his droll excursion into the mind of a 15-year-old female serial killer in *The Curse of Millhaven*, rank among the best performances of his ten-album solo career.

Best of all are the duets with P.J. Harvey (a spellbinding *Henry Lee*) and Kylie

Minogue on the mournful *Where the Wild Roses Grow*, Cave's biggest ever hit. The finale, a grand singalong version of Bob Dylan's *Death* is not the *End* featuring the massed voices of Cave, Harvey, Minogue, Shane MacGowan and others, it is so macabre it sounds as if the song has not so much been recorded as embalmed.

MARION
This World and Body
(London 828 699)

NEVER far from self-parody at the best of times, Ministry have drifted into the realms of cliché with their seventh album, *Fifth Pig*. Outfitted in recent years by a wave of industrial acts they influenced in the first place, notably Nine Inch Nails, the duo of Al Jourgensen and Paul Barker have responded by redoubling their efforts to sound as grossly domineering and nihilistic as possible.

The result is a wearying barrage of sub-Black Sabbath guitar riffs, accompanied by Jourgensen bellowing slogans such as "I've never had a life, I don't even know what life is" in his gargling-of-the-gods voice. It does not work at anything less than window-threatening volume, and even then its theatrical effect is strictly one-dimensional. And their version of Bob Dylan's *Lay Lady Lay* is so bad it is not even funny.

DAVID SINCLAIR

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EDUCATION

Why our universities have been driven to revolt

Peter Scott
explains the crisis
behind plans for
a £300 levy on
students

The universities are revolting. Today, the vice-chancellors will decide whether to charge new students an emergency levy of £300, as a preliminary to making all students pay for higher education. Also this week, the Association of University Teachers circulated to its entire membership a warning of gloom and doom and asked for concrete examples of the damage being caused by government cuts.

Their revolt has taken even the universities by surprise. The spark was the autumn Budget. The vice-chancellors, perhaps naively, had hoped for a broadly neutral outcome, even for a modest protection boost. In the event, the higher education budget was cut — recurrent funding broadly in line with the Higher Education Funding Council for England's private expectations, and capital expenditure slashed savagely.

The Private Finance Initiative, of course, was invoked as an alternative way to renew universities' and colleges' crumbling plant, but no one was deceived about the initiative's irrelevance in a flat property market. The vice-chancellors were shocked. So, too, was the academic community.

Former polytechnics feel equally betrayed. Buoyed up by their elevation to university status in 1992, just three years later they have been let down with a bump. Two new factors explain the universities' radical disenchantment. First, the limits of efficiency gains are being reached. In the past decade higher education has improved its productivity by more than a quarter. But this cannot continue without a radical change in the nature of higher education. We are trying to provide an elite system at mass-market prices.

Secondly, expansion has ground to a halt. When the Government first announced the new policy of "consolidation" three years ago, it seemed a temporary pause for breath. In the past 12 months it has become clear that growth will not resume before the end of the century. Also, there appears to be an alarming shortfall in student demand, which justifies the Government's policy (although sorting out cause and effect is difficult), but makes things even worse for universities because they risk losing money if they fail to fill their places.

The impact of the end-of-growth



The parents of these sixth-formers in Islington, north London, may be among the first to pay a £300 levy

has been profound. In cash terms, universities could live with plunging unit costs — the income they receive per student, so long as their actual budgets grew because more students were being enrolled. Now some find themselves dangerously over-extended and all have had their room for financial manoeuvre radically curtailed. In psychological terms, growth buoyed the system up. It was tough — higher workload and more pressure to publish — but it was worth it so long as a new higher education for a new Britain was being built. Now that optimism too has been punctured.

The vice-chancellors' decision to impose a levy — the proposal is likely to be approved if only because there seems to be no

alternative — is a cry of anger and pain. Their message is "enough is enough". Their hope that in a pre-election year the Government, more interested in cash-backs (as to electricity consumers) than new demands on tax-resistant voters, will be stunned by the prospect of perhaps half a million predominantly middle-class parents receiving an unexpected bill for £300 from October 1997.

Perhaps the threat alone will be sufficient. Certainly if it will be carried out there will be difficulties. How many universities will reject the levy on principled grounds? How many, faced with a tight recruitment market, will waive it? How many students, or their parents,

will adopt the can't-pay-won't-pay tactic so successfully employed in the poll tax crisis. Will there be legal challenges?

The Government, for reverse (perverse) reasons, has condemned the proposal. For several years ministers have nodded indulgently at the anguished attempts by some vice-chancellors to persuade their colleagues to agree to charge top-up fees. Now, when it looks as if the vice-chancellors have screwed up their courage in the sticking point, ministers have gone into reverse. Universities and colleges, they now say, have sufficient resources provided they manage them sensibly.

The curious outcome is that most vice-chancellors probably support the levy, although many still have

doubts about charging top-up fees on a permanent basis. With the Government it is the other way round. Ministers are absolutely opposed to the emergency levy, for straightforward electoral reasons, but keen to see the long-term burden for providing higher education transferred from taxpayers to "customers", that is, students and their parents.

Both sides are being unrealistic. The vice-chancellors have a short-term strategy, to keep the political pressure on the Government. But the countervailing pressures on ministers, to deliver tax cuts while not harming too publicly frontline services in schools, housing or social services, are much more powerful.

The vice-chancellors still lack a genuine long-term strategy. Ostensibly it is to campaign for the introduction of income-contingent loans to cover tuition as well as student maintenance. Under this scheme the Government puts more money for higher education up front and students pay it back sometimes or never. The scheme does not appeal to the Treasury. Those vice-chancellors who are committed to the principle of public funding of higher education know this, which is why they are prepared to go along with income-contingent loans. They know they are never going to happen.

Our present unsatisfactory and inequitable student loans system and year-on-year efficiency gains are holding down costs nicely. The only kind of "alternative" funding that ministers will accept is a system that produces immediate and substantial savings — which is the last thing vice-chancellors want. Their greatest fear is a scenario in which the success of top-up fees enables the Government to cut its contribution. Those vice-chancellors who are committed to the principle of public funding of higher education know this, which is why they are prepared to go along with income-contingent loans. They know they are never going to happen.

But the Government is being equally naive and shortsighted. Universities with disaffected leaders, stressed staff, ageing equipment and crumbling buildings overflowing with students cannot play their part in building a new Britain. The "other government" led by Michael Heseltine, with its mantra about competitiveness and technology foresight, affects to believe that universities are key institutions in enhancing our national wellbeing. If this is more than rhetoric it must mean that somewhere in the depths of Whitehall the case for investing in higher education is acknowledged. The vice-chancellors' task is to unlock this secret support.

• The author is director of the Centre for Policy Studies in Education at the University of Leeds.



The elite of Oxford — but do they put off many pupils?

Oxbridge doors 'should be opened wider'

Our ancient centres of learning are not doing enough to admit state school pupils

The recent debate on elitism in state-financed education has centred on the grammar schools, but I also have concerns about Oxford and Cambridge.

A Cambridge graduate I am convinced that outstanding centres of tertiary education, by no means only Oxford and Cambridge, are essential in this very competitive world. But if they receive public money, they should be equally accessible to pupils of exceptional talent regardless of background.

Oxford and Cambridge take a disproportionately large number of candidates from the independent sector. Why? There are many issues and many colleges are determinedly seeking to redress the balance.

Selection is essentially imperfect,

and this has led us at the Henrietta Barnett School to examine carefully both our entrance examination and interview procedure. We are a multi-ethnic, multi-faith community and one third of our pupils are bilingual. No faith or ethnic group dominates. We constantly question how we can give equal opportunities to our candidates and how we can identify real potential, rather than achievement gained through a stultifying coaching regime.

The intentions of Oxford and Cambridge to widen their intake are clear, as such schemes as the "Target Schools" demonstrate. But these intentions are not always confirmed by candidates' experiences at interview. Last year I wrote an open letter to all colleges to which our girls had applied. I had helpful feedback from many colleges and yet I continue to hear disturbing reports from my pupils.

The interviewer kept interrupting the interview to arrange some Christmas event.

"He was reading *The Guardian*

when I arrived and had not read my application form."

"The two interviewers were more interested in scoring academic points off each other and gave me little opportunity to speak for myself."

A girl who had had a debilitating and depressing illness was asked whether she thought she would take to drink and drugs at university.

A Muslim girl in a headscarf was asked where she came from and what her parents [shopkeepers] did for a living.

I know that the comments above are only the perceptions of the candidates, but for the often less confident state school pupil the experience can be destructive. It should be possible to interview in such a way that a candidate feels that she has had the opportunity to be assessed fairly, and rejection is not then to be regarded as negative. Letters sent to me by colleges with individual comments are very much appreciated.

My current A-level pupils achieved outstanding GCSE results, attracting much national publicity. Some of our most able would not consider Oxford and Cambridge and some of those returning from interviews have confirmed the prejudices of my students. The college that sent a friendly welcoming letter to a student going for interview, sending our clearly what was expected as regards dress, topics likely to be covered and the procedure to be followed, is still an exception.

All colleges should take seriously the disproportionate intake of state school pupils and consider the image they are giving. An interview is a two-way process. Stories such as those above circulate in schools and do much harm.

It was suggested to me by an admissions tutor that many Cambridge colleges are not places for a quiet or self-effacing pupil, however bright. The interview techniques described above confirm this, and Cambridge is the loser.

JANE DE SWIET

• The author is head teacher of the Henrietta Barnett School, a selective girls' school in north London.

Learning the tricks of the exam trade

How to make the most of an Easter tutorial college

Students hoping for Easter miracles from a tutorial college revision programme are being advised to be more realistic about their aims.

Two years of study will not be magically delivered in a week-long course, but the techniques taught can make grades of difference to the A-level candidate. One of the key benefits of a revision course is the way it can help to refine study skills and ensure that the work already done by sixth-formers is put to optimum use.

Elizabeth Rickards, co-principal at Davies, Laing & Dick, one of the leading tutorial colleges, says: "The most common reason in our experience why students underachieve in exams is because they do not know what the examiner wants. They have no experience of seeing what an A-grade answer looks like, and even if they do know, they just have not practised enough the theory of good exam performance."

Easter revision courses focus on teaching students how to revise effectively. Many young people disappear off to their rooms as the exams draw near, but are they actually working up there? Are they covering all the material? Are they revising topics they like and are good at, but ignoring those topics which actually need more attention?

She says that students of A-level mathematics were notorious at sticking to "soft"

topics to revise if left to their own devices.

Easter revision courses teach you to treat the whole business of exams in an efficient and professional manner. You learn to stop feeling overwhelmed by the whole exam ordeal and you become motivated to get down to work."

The fact that parents are digging deep to aid the candidate's chances must be an incentive. A week's course costs £300 to £400 on average, but demystifying the A-

The techniques taught can make grades of difference to A-level pupils

level process is part of a good revision college's role. Ms Rickards feels that "the first and most important aspect of motivating students is to make them realise that they can be successful. You do not have to be Einstein to get good grades at A level but you do have to be thorough and organised, and you need to know what the examiner is looking for."

Finding a course to suit your needs is becoming ever more difficult, however, with a growth in "seasonal" colleges which emerge only at Easter. They are not nec-

essarily to be avoided because the more reputable use experienced classroom teachers available only during the Easter break.

But the 32-college Conference for Independent Further Education (CIFE) counsels caution. Myles Glover, the organisation's secretary, says: "On the whole the mushrooming of the seasonal providers is not good news for the public. All of our colleges are established and run courses the whole year and they have a core of permanent full-time staff, giving stability. The danger of seasonal providers is that they simply come into the market and are effectively brokers between freelance tutors and parents."

The independent consultancy, Gabbitas, also advises parents to do their own homework on colleges before parting with the average £350 for a week's revision.

Wendy Johnson of Gab-

bitas says: "Our advisers have noticed an increase in the numbers setting up just for Easter. Parents ought to find out what system there is of comeback or guarantee of standards." She advises parents to ask for details of past performances and the organisation has taught, so that they can be quizzed about its service.

DAVID CHARTER

• To check whether a college is a member of CIFE, contact it on 01233 820797.

Are we getting value for our money from Ofsted?

On Monday, Chris Woodhead, the Senior Chief Inspector of Schools, will pronounce on the performance of state education over the past year. But what sort of value did the taxpayer get for the £67 million spent by Ofsted, the agency he heads?

The inspection system has been scrutinised in a report for CIBT Education Services, Ofsted's largest contractor. This is not, perhaps, the most impartial source, since CIBT presumably wants to remain in business, but the judgments are creditably objective. A key proposal, to move to a ten-year inspection cycle, for example, is certainly not in the organisation's interests.

The author of the study is Mike Douse, who ran Australia's Disadvantaged Schools Programme in the 1970s and now advises governments all over the world. Not previously acquainted with the Ofsted system, his verdict in the agency's jargon might be "sound but with important weaknesses".

Some of the report's criticisms are mildly coded, as Ofsted's often are. But most do not take much reading between the lines. A call for the agency to be "ideologically objective and also manifestly appearing so", for example, will be seen as a barely disguised reference to Mr Woodhead's more controversial outpourings.

However, the main criticisms, which would find an echo in schools up and down the country, are that the process is too negative and mechanistic. The framework under which inspectors operate is to alter in April, addressing some of Mr. Douse's concerns, but the present reliance on checklists and pseudo-scientific analysis is a common source of disquiet.

Ofsted's approach is both

Time to inspect the inspector

some guarantee of consistency among the disparate teams and a defence against charges of unfairness, but it is also a stratagem preventing inspectors from masking constructive comments. The report urges that, as inspection gains acceptance, qualitative impressions should be encouraged. "By such means, inspection should come to encourage high-quality

reports want schools to be judged against national standards, but express doubt about the way they are measured at present. Mr Douse says that some Ofsted statistics are "dangerously misleading" and suggests using socio-economic indicators as well as examination results to set targets for improvement, which would trigger a full inspection if they were not met.

He also finds that while Ofsted reports may be meaningful to the professionals, the same cannot be said of parents, who are marginalised under the current arrangements. The report says that the summary reports provided to parents achieve little, and many head teachers "massage the inspectors' messages through highly selected media releases and letters to parents".

However, Mr Douse is generally impressed by the integrity of all sides concerned with inspection. "Many of them are sceptical — even cynical — regarding the process; and frequently they mistrust one another. But there is a general sense of just about everyone attempting to make the existing arrangements operate as well as possible, while still reserving the right to comment and the ability to dream. Whatever else it may have done, Ofsted has certainly helped to stimulate a widespread, fascinating and, in my view, potentially valuable national educational debate."

The sentiments are echoed

in a second report on inspection published this week by the National Union of Teachers. Professor John MacBeath, of Strathclyde University, argues that the Scottish system, with its emphasis on self-evaluation, produces a more frank and accurate assessment of schools' real strengths and weaknesses.

Both reports want schools to be judged against national standards, but express doubt about the way they are measured at present. Mr Douse says that some Ofsted statistics are "dangerously misleading" and suggests using socio-economic indicators as well as examination results to set targets for improvement, which would trigger a full inspection if they were not met.

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JOHN O'LEARY

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Young disciples would cherish a game fit for heroes

Walk along a piece of common land in Wales in summer and there you will find small boys playing cricket. Listen and you will hear that they imagine themselves as England, even in these difficult cricketing times, playing a Test against Australia or West Indies. Playing for higher international stakes, they might for the moment ignore Glamorgan. Atherton's name will be on every schoolboy's lips as each, in his mind's eye, thinks himself to be the England captain at the crease.

Across in the playground of the school, a football game may be in progress, of the spontaneous type where pull-overs form the goalposts and no adult dares interfere. Listen closely to their shouts and the running commentary and Manchester United will be playing Liverpool or Chelsea. There will be no sign of Cardiff or Wrexham. The clamour will be for Giggs, Rush and Hughes just as much as for Cantona and Schmeichel. Premiership, top of the league stuff, is what matters. Hero worship is a fine thing.

A child's mind is a kingdom is. Willy-nilly he will happily cross boundaries without favour; but not always. Not in rugby.

Behind the goalposts in Bala or Llangennech, schoolboys will strike eternal attitudes. Wales will forever be playing England and, unlike the other sports, there will be no takers this time for England. Rugby is Wales.

Wales may languish, as some say, in the third division of world rugby, whereas England are at the top of the first along with South Africa, New Zealand and France. However tarnished the Wales jersey may have become of late, the boys in the village game will always aspire to wear it and aspire in the park that Wales always win. For these youngsters' heroes are born still to play rugby in Wales.

A Welshman will freely



FIVE NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP
As Wales prepare for Twickenham, Gerald Davies says beating England is still important

admit, as Arwel Thomas did last weekend, that, for him, England are the team to beat. England may not care to admit as much, be more reticent, reserved or wishing to effect a cool disinterest in these matters, but, come the moment when the whistle blows, they will feel the same, too, down at the clubhouses of Saracens and Wasps.

Thomas plays against England for the first time tomorrow, but he will, in his mind's eye, have done so innumerable times before on Trebanos's spare patch. He will have imagined great games of ebb and flow, of attack and counter-attack, of thrust and parry and the match will have been won and lost, amid a crescendo of excitement, in the dying minutes with a kick or a goal.

The truth, sadly, falls far short of this for the matches have hardly been ones to inspire. Games between the countries lead to tension and inevitably demand much of a man's nerves; but they are of the teeth-grinding, jaw-jutting kind. There is, finally, no prodigious skill as events unfold, only a stomach for endurance and defiance. Of all the

more than that, it is high time that we had a game of greatness — and for new heroes to be born — especially in Wales. There is much need of them.

That the fixture has the capacity to diminish players was manifest in the bitterness that overflowed into violence at the Arms Park in 1987. Players carry the baggage of the past and cannot cope with it; as, indeed, does the spectator, who is too loud in his grievances or exaggerated celebrations.

It remains a great fixture, but one that, by now, deserves a better outcome. Of late, Wales have been out of sorts, too frayed at the edges to make this come about. England have had too much of their own way to make the game a proper contest. If the Welsh way of the Seventies queried whether it was worth continuing the fixture, so can England question that now. The ball is in Wales's court.

More than that, it is high time that we had a game of greatness — and for new heroes to be born — especially in Wales. There is much need of them.

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Asprilla's transfer blocked by insurance

By DAVID MAADDOCK

NEWCASTLE United's intended £7.6 million purchase of Faustino Asprilla, the Colombia international, has reached an impasse because of complications with insurance.

The player's proposed transfer from Parma has been delayed for nearly a week, with little prospect of an immediate solution.

The reason, it transpires, is that Newcastle have been unable to secure adequate insurance cover for a player who will command such a significant fee. Scans taken of Asprilla's knee at the medical that he underwent last Friday revealed a congenital problem that could lead to an arthritic condition.

The problem is unlikely to affect the forward's performance in the foreseeable future and Newcastle are still keen to complete the deal. The club's insurance company, however, is unwilling to provide cover for a player rated

broke their silence yesterday when Sir John Hall, the club chairman, confirmed that, while the situation had reached an impasse, they were still hopeful of completing the transfer.

"The board are handling negotiations as they always do when they get to this stage," he said. "There are still a number of matters to be resolved to our satisfaction. We are running a business and we must be left to get on with it."

Sir John dismissed as "absolute rubbish" suggestions that the medical examination uncovered separate problems relating to Asprilla's private life.

The player's advisors are looking into such accusations to see if they are actionable.

The players' advisors are clearly worried that the insurance question may eventually scupper the deal. Parma officials were reported to be on their way to Newcastle last night, with evidence that they suggest will prove that the knee problem will have no bearing on the forward's career. "He could play for 15 years without being affected," the spokesman said.

Eric Cantona returns to Selhurst Park tomorrow for his first visit since the infamous night, a year ago, when he ventured into the Crystal Palace crowd and kicked a supporter. Police have come up with plans to deal with any Palace supporters attempting to attend Manchester United's fixture with Wimbleton intent on causing trouble.

People only have one picture of Eric — it is that he is a bully," he said. "They say he is good at football, but he is a hooligan."

"It is completely untrue! He is a gentleman," I say. "I am a different person from the picture that has been painted. I know him, I train with him and he doesn't deserve the image. I'm not saying that I would have gone into the crowd, but I fully understand why he did it. The pressure on him is enormous."

Sources in Parma confirmed last night that the insurance issue had become a sticking block. "We understand that Newcastle are attempting to find a way of negotiating a solution to the problem and we are hopeful the deal will still go ahead," the club's media spokesman said.

Newcastle had imposed a news blackout on the deal over the past seven days, but they

Asprilla: knee condition

among the most expensive in the world when he is suffering a condition that has implications for his playing future.

It leaves the FA Carling Premiership leaders with a dilemma that they are unable to solve at present. They have given their word to complete the deal, but are unable to do so because they cannot take the gamble of paying such a huge fee for a player without the safety net of insurance.

Efforts continue to thrash out a compromise with the insurers and Parma.

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Tunisia revel in the sound of silence



Two young spectators leave no doubt as to where their loyalties lie as South Africa, Bafana Bafana, take on Ghana. Photograph: Judd Ngwenya

In South Africa, soccer is a black game. The receptionist in the hotel where I am staying said: "I am keen on soccer; it is the same as hockey, so I understand it." Around her, the others shook their heads and said: "It's not like rugby or cricket."

That was earlier in the week. What makes the African Nations Cup final tomorrow required viewing and has sold out the 80,000 capacity Johannesburg Soccer City Stadium is that the national team, known as *Bafana Bafana* (the boys), has made it to the last shoot-out won their group, beat Algeria in the quarter-final, demolished the *Black Stars* of Ghana in the semi and have only lost to the tournament, a man wearing a jacket marked "Spectator Assistance" gave me a cursory body check and told the man behind me that he could not bring in his can of Coca-Cola — bodies would be all right.

Admission was 20 or 35 Rand (you get about six to the pound) and I opted for the higher price; inside the huge stadium, nobody examined the small print on the ticket and, as the new North Stand was bathed in 90-degree sunshine and deserted, I took my seat in the less than half-full

they were due to exit this competition courtesy of mighty Zambia at the Kingsmead rugby stadium in Durban, and as forecasts about attendance were pessimistic — less of a follow-the-crowd than a what-time-can-you-get-along occasion — I went.

My driver dropped me where the police had erected a road block a quarter of a mile from the stadium, and I shuffled past the car parks towards the entrance. There were two stalls selling fast food, one man and his daughter offering African caps and African flags. Nobody selling programmes. In the shortish queue to the turnstiles, a man wearing a jacket marked "Spectator Assistance" gave me a cursory body check and told the man behind me that he could not bring in his can of Coca-Cola — bodies would be all right.

Admission was 20 or 35 Rand (you get about six to the pound) and I opted for the higher price; inside the huge stadium, nobody examined the small print on the ticket and, as the new North Stand was bathed in 90-degree sunshine and deserted, I took my seat in the less than half-full

starched white cloth. Three men in suits sat behind it like officials at a Haitian cock-fight, or under sitting out a *déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

We were 14 minutes into the game when Tunisia scored a soft goal, more of a cross that struck behind the keeper, and as this was just what those who had come did not want to see, the event was met with silence. The silence intensified when Tunisia scored again after a pathetic defensive mix-up and now the crowd was whistling, which is like Brits boozing: the noise similar to that at the cage birds show at Blackpool which used to precede the Liberal Party assembly.

"We are all Africans, not Arabs anyway, they useless, they not here for long."

There was a lot of smiling and waving of the new African flag I had bought one; I waved it.

Zambia were the classy footballers hot favourites. They knew that they would win, wanted to show their Afro-supporters how it is done. Tunisia had a solid defence and played honest football. On the halfway line, there was a trestle table with a

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There was a lot of smiling and waving of the new African flag I had bought one; I waved it.

Zambia were the classy footballers hot favourites. They knew that they would win, wanted to show their Afro-supporters how it is done. Tunisia had a solid defence and played honest football. On the halfway line, there was a trestle table with a

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OBITUARIES

SIR JOHN CARMICHAEL

Sir John Carmichael, KBE, civil servant, businessman and golfer.
died on January 6 aged 85. He was born on April 22, 1910.

JOHN CARMICHAEL returned to his native Scotland from Sudan in the late 1950s. The experience he had gained in Africa as a civil servant and financial and economic adviser to the first post-independence Sudanese Government made him a welcome addition to the boardrooms of several top British companies. Besides his time at Fisons — where he was chief executive, 1962-66 — he served the fishing, gas, jute and chemical industries.

Carmichael was also a first-class golfer, who played off a single-figure handicap. He could often be seen striding around the Old Course at St Andrews, and won the Royal and Ancient's Jubilee Vase there in 1964. He was captain of the Royal and Ancient, 1974-75.

John Carmichael was born in St Andrews and educated there at Madras College. He graduated from St Andrews University with first class honours in mathematics and physics. He was given his blue by Blue, and had a trial for the Scottish team. Although he never won a cap, he was a reserve on 13 occasions.

After a year on a Commonwealth Fellowship at the University of Michigan, he returned to Britain and joined Guardian Assurance. Then in 1963 he decided on a complete change of career. He joined the Sudanese Civil Service, and went out to Sudan, where his duties included a spell as Permanent Under-Secretary to the Ministry of Finance. In that post Carmichael was given a free rein to develop his business skills. He used to joke that, on one occasion during the Second World War, he was involved in selling the entire cotton crop.

Sudan was one of the few African countries to retain the service of some British civil servants after independence. Carmichael stayed on after 1966, and Ismail al-Azhari, the first Prime Minister, later fondly described him as "the white man in our woodpile". But in 1959 Carmichael returned to Scotland and bought a house at Balmullo, just outside St Andrews. There he cultivated a handsome garden, full of all the known



species of heather in Scotland. He was appointed to the UK delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations and the following year, 1960, joined Fisons as a non-executive director, initially as chairman of its production subsidiary in Sudan.

Two years later he was made chief executive of Fisons, succeeding Avison Wormald. Carmichael brought in George Burton as his deputy chief executive, and, while Burton concentrated on overseas trade, Carmichael turned his mind to the home market.

Wormald had already begun the process of diversification of Fisons interests, and Carmichael continued the process. For the past century, the Fisons market had been largely UK-based. Carmichael made it more of an international player, and he spent a good deal of time abroad, travelling with Burton to India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Kenya and Uganda. By-products to the Fisons fertiliser

range were introduced, and included weedkillers, shampoos and specialised food products. While other British companies struggled through a lean period, Fisons remained in healthy shape throughout the mid-1960s. After George Burton had succeeded as chief executive in 1966, Carmichael became deputy chairman for six years, and then reverted to his old status on the board as non-executive director until 1969.

Fisons was one in a growing number of board appointments. By the late 1960s, Carmichael had been brought onto the board of Jute Industries (renamed Sidlaw Industries in 1969), and groomed by Sir William Walker, the outgoing chairman, as his apparent successor. He was appointed chairman in 1970 and remained in the post for the next decade.

Carmichael's main achievement at Sidlaw was to transform it from an old-fashioned textile business, based in

Dundee, to a major provider of services to the nascent oil industry in Scotland. When he arrived, jute, the product on which the business's fortunes were founded, was increasingly being provided not by Dundee companies but by those in Bangladesh and Calcutta. Diversification was the only option if the company was not to sink with the rest of the industry.

In 1972 Carmichael organised the lease, (subsequently the purchase) of reclaimed land within the port area of Peterhead, north of Aberdeen. The company began to organise the logistics of the management of these ports, and so got involved, at just the right moment in North Sea oil. The period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s was one of substantial growth for Sidlaw, much of it attributable to Carmichael's timely initiative.

He was also chairman of the Herring Advisory Board, 1960-63, and deputy chairman of the Independent Television Authority, 1960-63. By the mid-1970s he had reduced his commitments in the South and was concentrating his energies in Scotland. He served on the boards of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Abbey National, and the Scottish Development Advisory Board. He was appointed KBE in 1955.

During his period as the Rector's assessor at St Andrews University, 1965-66, he worked with such diverse figures as C. P. Snow, Sir Learie Constantine and Lord Boothby.

Carmichael was a softly-spoken man, with a disarming, lopsided smile. He enjoyed family life, and every year took his family on holiday, sometimes less successfully than others. One year, he rented a caravan with which to tour Scotland. He reached as far as Speyside, not much north of St Andrews, before discovering that he had little idea how to reverse the cumbersome vehicle, let alone park it. Instead, he booked the entire family into the local hotel for the entire holiday.

Those who knew him well suspected that he may never have had any real intention of venturing further north than Speyside. With many good golf courses at hand, there seemed little reason to.

He is survived by his wife Cecilia, whom he married in 1940, and by one son and three daughters.

BRIGADIER BILL VICKERS

Brigadier Bill Vickers, DSO, OBE, died on January 28 aged 82. He was born on January 19, 1914.

THE challenge of commanding an infantry battalion other than one of one's own regiments is always formidable. The task faced by Bill Vickers, a tall, raw-boned man of rather gaunt aspect, was especially so. After 22 years of service exclusively with British troops, he was appointed to command 2nd Battalion 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Slimoor Rifles), whose stocky, tough but unfailingly humorous soldiers stood only as high as his shoulder. This was in Hong Kong in January 1956 but the battalion was due to move to Malaya, where the eight-year-old communist insurrection still smouldered on.

Vickers commanded 2nd/2nd "Goorkhas", as they were invariably known, during two years of intensive operations against the residual hardcore of the communist terrorists, initially in Negeri Sembilan state in the south-



west of the Malay peninsula. By that stage of the campaign, the tide had turned against the insurgents, thanks to the farsighted policies of the successive Directors of Operations. Generals Sir Harold Briggs and Sir Gerald Templer.

During the second half of 1956, Vickers concentrated on the Kuala Pilah district, where operations by "A" company of the battalion, commanded by Major Grahame Vivian, acting on Special Branch information and intelligence from surrendered terrorists, killed or captured several of the key communist leaders in the area.

The following year saw 2nd/2nd Goorkhas operating in the neighbouring state of Johore, where a high proportion of the predominantly Chinese population persisted in their support of the terrorists still in the jungle. Accompanied by a Special Branch officer and only a small escort, Vickers trekked into the interior on four occasions to negotiate personally the surrender of terrorists. He was mentioned in dispatches in 1957 and the

citation for his award of the DSO in 1958 read: "Lieutenant-Colonel Vickers has added to the renown and fighting traditions of his regiment and proved himself to be a fearless, skilled and determined leader. Inspired by his leadership, his men achieved many successes in jungle operations against a wary, treacherous and dangerous enemy."

Arthur William Neville Langston Vickers was born in London, the son of William C. L. Vickers, an electrical en-

gineer. He was educated at Clifton, which he represented at cricket, rugby, lives and boxing, and entered the Royal Military College Sandhurst via a cadet scholarship in 1932. He was commissioned into the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in 1934.

After prewar service in India and Burma with the 2nd KOYLI, Vickers was recalled to accompany the 1st Battalion to France in 1939. Later, as part of the 15th Infantry Brigade, the same battalion took part in the ill-fated British intervention in Norway. Virtually without air support, the brigade was landed near the Aandalsnes fjord on April 18, 1940, only to be withdrawn 12 days later in the face of the German advance northwards up the Gludbrand Valley from Oslo, strongly supported by the Luftwaffe.

After staff college in 1941 and appointments in England, he returned to regimental service as second-in-command of 4th Battalion The Somerset Light Infantry in time for the Normandy invasion. He was wounded and evacuated, only to return as soon as he had

recovered, this time in command of the 1st Battalion The Worcester Regiment in the 43rd Wessex Division, which saw stiff fighting in Holland and Germany in the winter of 1944-45.

He was appointed OBE in 1945 in recognition of his war service and posted to the Staff College, Camberley, as an instructor in 1948. Shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, he was appointed AA & QMG of the 1st Commonwealth Division. The years 1951-52 were the grimest of this grueling war, during which Vickers was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the United States Bronze Star. A brief period with 2nd KOYLI was followed by brevet promotion to lieutenant-colonel, a period on the Allied Staff in Berlin and then command of 2nd/2nd Gurkha Rifles.

Following his successful period in command, he was promoted colonel and served on the Nato staff of Allied Forces Central Europe and as an instructor at the RAF Staff College, before being appointed Inspector of Intelligence and Commandant of the Joint Services Intelligence Centre in the rank of brigadier. He retired from the Army in 1967 but remained in government service, engaged in security work, until 1970.

For eight years he served as general secretary of the Soil Association, working with E. F. Schumacher and Lady Eve Balfour. For many years during his retirement he was an active member of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association, but was able to find time to play single-figure handicap golf and local cricket in and around Harleston in Norfolk, where he had made his home.

He is survived by his wife Juan, whom he married in 1939, and by their two sons and two daughters.

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TRAFFIC

Kremlin offer fails to halt showdown that could prove damaging for embattled President

Half a million Russian miners strike over pay

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL IN MOSCOW

HALF a million miners chose President Yeltsin's 55th birthday to go on a nationwide strike yesterday in an echo of the industrial action that helped to bring down Mikhail Gorbachev.

The strike went ahead despite last-minute attempts by the Government to dampen down what could turn into a political challenge to Mr Yeltsin ahead of the presidential elections in June. Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, promised the miners 600 billion roubles (£84 million) on Tuesday. But most of the outstanding debts in the coal industry are from private companies, not the Government and cannot be paid back immediately.

Even conservative figures from the state-run coal company Rosugol put the number of strikers yesterday at more than 300,000 in 118 pits. The miners are demanding wages, which in some cases have not been paid since last October. Miners are better paid than most Russian workers, but have to endure appalling living conditions and the health



Yeltsin: pledged to pay overdue salaries

hazards of poorly maintained mines.

In the northern city of Vorkuta 7,000 miners marched through the streets carrying banners saying "Down with hungry reforms!" and "It's there for the war but not our salaries" and calling on the Government to resign.

Yuri Vishnevsky, a union leader, said that he had not yet had any serious proposals from the Government and that he did not think the strike would

end soon. At a noisy demonstration outside the Government headquarters in the middle of Moscow this week miners broke their hard hats on the ground in symbolic protest. They said they had no money left to feed their families.

A miners' strike in Ukraine, called simultaneously, brought out 600,000 workers, union leaders said. A group of disabled miners gathered in central Kiev to demand special privileges.

The heart of the Russian strike is in the West Siberian region of Kuzbass, Russia's biggest mining belt. In 1989 and in the spring of 1991 the Kuzbass came out on strike against Mr Gorbachev and helped Mr Yeltsin to win the presidential elections a few months later. Now political allegiances have switched and 53 per cent of the population voted for the Communist Party in last December's parliamentary election.

It is too early to tell what the economic effects of the strike will be. Some pits have said they will strike for 48 hours, others that they are going on indefinite strike. According to Aleksandr Yevushenko, the Russian First Deputy Energy Minister, some remote areas of Siberia and the Far East could be left without power in a couple of days if the strike goes on. The steel industry, which is almost completely reliant on coal, will also suffer.

At the heart of the problem is a vicious circle of unpaid debt between the Government and industry. Many large state companies have not paid the taxes they owe to the Finance Ministry, which in turn says that its coffers are empty. Factories, for their part, say they cannot pay taxes because they are owed money by their customers.

President Yeltsin has signed a series of decrees this week to pay overdue salaries, but has not indicated how the budget, which sets strict inflationary guidelines, will pay for them.

In addition to the miners, teachers have staged a three-day strike in 51 Russian regions of Russia this week, again complaining of unpaid wages. Air traffic controllers met in Moscow yesterday and voted to postpone a threatened strike until the end of the month.

If the situation does not ease soon, it will be a perfect propaganda weapon for the Communist Party against Mr Yeltsin in the presidential election in June.

Life ekes out above and below ground

BY ANATOL LIEVEN

THE miners are probably the only section of the Russian proletariat with any chance of launching a real mass protest movement.

"We don't trust the Government, the party or our own leaders, for that matter," a miner once told me. "but we trust each other. Down the mine, you have to trust each other, or you're dead."

Accidents and respiratory diseases are appallingly common and apparently getting worse. It is not unusual for miners to have to crawl on hands and knees through pools of sludge and icy water. The conditions of supporting beams and rescue equipment has horrified Western experts.

What really infuriates the miners, however, is that for the past few years they have received their monthly pay several days late each month, so they are now three or four months behind.

The mining companies say that they have often not been paid for coal supplied. State power stations and railways are the worst offenders. The

miners suspect, however, that in many cases managers have diverted the money into private trading companies to make a quick profit.

The miners' conditions are not quite as bad as the official statistics might suggest. Despite its large and decaying towns, the Kuzbass region is in some ways less urbanised than the mining areas of Western Europe and many miners are not too far from their parents' or grandparents' peasant roots. Many live in cottages on their own allotments, where their wives grow vegetables and keep a few animals.

Although the climate of the Kuzbass, unlike Ukraine's Donbass, is hardly suitable for fruit, the miners do manage to grow some. There is also hunting in Siberia's forests — a bit like Robert De Niro and his working-class friends in *The Deer Hunter*.

Up to now, these ameliorations, and the lack of a clear cause, ideology or leader, have helped to prevent the miners' discontent from growing into serious unrest.

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Viktor Chernomyrdin and Al Gore are served with a hot dog and a sandwich in New York. The Russian later tackled a pastrami sandwich as well

'Pastrami summit' leaves New York diners in awe

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK

AMERICA'S Vice-President, Al Gore, has found a new form of political dialogue: "deli diplomacy". Mr Gore took Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Russian Prime Minister, to lunch at the quintessential New York delicatessen.

In what has been dubbed "the pastrami summit", the two politicians joined the lunch-time crowd at Katz's, a Jewish deli on Manhattan's lower East Side which, since 1888, has been known for its sardonic staff and big helpings.

Things began uncertainly when Mr Chernomyrdin, swed by the boundiful

array of pickles, handcut meats and Dr Brown's celery soda, said that he would merely take a hot dog. "A hot dog?" stalled counter "boy" David Tarowsky, 83, who has worked at Katz's for 53 years and has "seen 'em all".

Mr Chernomyrdin, aware of his gaffe, recovered quickly by ordering one of Katz's celebrated four-inch-thick pastrami sandwiches. He created a minor sensation by taking it in addition to the hot dog.

Mr Gore, who likes to watch his weight, made only a meek attempt at his pastrami and corned beef on rye with mustard. As the order was shouted down the counter by Mr Tarowsky, Katz's regulars nodded

drudging respect, but the Vice-President managed only three bites before summing up a doggy bag. Meanwhile, Mr Chernomyrdin went to work on his lunch and showed himself to be a trencherman. He demolished the hot dog, wiped his brow, and then made creditable headway with the pastrami mountain.

There was little opportunity for diplomatic chat as the two men sat at an ordinary table complete with ketchup bottle, napkin dispenser and sugar funnel. A determined Mr Chernomyrdin, chewing ever more slowly, came up only for air and the occasional draught of Diet Pepsi. After 20 minutes he, too, had to call for a doggy

bag, but not before his hand had been shaken in admiration by numerous fellow diners.

Fred Austin, co-owner of Katz's, had earlier said that the Vice-President and his guest would be treated "rudely — like we treat everybody else. It's part of the New York ethos." As they left, however, the deli's manager, Robert Albinder, conceded: "The Russian guy never stood a chance, but he did well."

Mr Gore left no tip, leading to unfriendly remarks that "there is clearly only one Tipper in the family" — Mrs Gore's name being Tipper. However, Mr Albinder said that tips were not obligatory for counter-served customers.

Yeltsin's foe vows to revive Soviet might

FROM TOM RHOADES
IN WASHINGTON

THE man Washington most fears will depose President Yeltsin in June was peddling a distinctly threatening world view in the pages of a leading American newspaper yesterday.

Writing in *The New York Times*, Gennadi Zyuganov, the leader of the Russian Communist Party which showed such strong gains in national elections last December, lambasted the "neo-liberal" regimes

denigrated by Mr Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev, denigrated peregrinata and branded Moscow's attempts at economic reform a disaster.

Offering a blueprint of Russian-American relations post-Yeltsin, Mr Zyuganov said the Communists viewed as dangerous the lack of military and strategic parity between the two countries after the collapse of the former Soviet Union.

"We would restore the might of the Russian state and its status in the world. That would make its policies incomparably more predictable and responsible than they are today," Mr Zyuganov wrote.

And we see the restoration

of the union of the former Soviet peoples — based on voluntary association — as a historical necessity dictated by Russia's needs and those of world security."

Foreign policy would be limited to maintaining state security. Nato expansion and the deployment of alliance troops in the former Yugoslavia were, he said, examples of

how such institutions claimed the right to interfere in other people's affairs.

Several years have passed since the Cold War ended, but relations between our countries are far from harmonious," he said. "Though it must renounce useless and excessive military spending, Russia never was — or could be — a junior partner. Any policy that counts on Russia's remaining in its humiliating position, following in the American wake, is doomed to defeat."

Iranian banker disappears 'with £9m'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

IRAN'S most trusted banker in Paris has disappeared, allegedly taking with him £70 million (£9 million) belonging to the Tehran Government.

A Marxist-Leninist group opposed to the Iranian Government claims that Hedayat Ashtari Lardi, the director of the Paris branch of Bank Sepah, Iran's oldest bank, has joined its ranks.

Tehran insists that he is merely a thief and a Paris magistrate is examining the case. Agents of the Iranian secret service are reportedly追寻ing the missing man while their counterparts in Britain and France would also like to find the elusive banker.

For seven years Mr Ashtari handled sensitive economic transactions between France and Iran, but over the past year relations between the banker and his political bosses in Tehran had begun to sour. In December, Mr Ashtari

has since claimed that the missing banker is a committed member of the group.

The first sign that the banker was no longer getting on well with his superiors came when he allegedly refused to send a \$6 million (£4 million) commission claimed by some of his bosses for negotiating the sale of three Airbus planes to the company, Safiran.

Mr Ashtari later protested

when the Tehran Government sized £1.45 million from the bank account of a company it believed to be linked to the opposition group. The banker is also believed to have played the money markets through a specialist Bureau de Change in Paris.

He was ordered to return to Tehran late last year. He did not do so, and on November 23 his flat in Paris was broken

into and his wife was attacked, according to a report in *L'Express* magazine. A few days later Mr Ashtari and his family went into hiding.

The dissident group has warned the Iranian secret service that if anything happens to Mr Ashtari "the response will be severe". The group claimed that the banker had found it "more and more difficult to accept the anti-popular actions of the Iranian regime and kept his distance from them. The regime tried to get Mr Ashtari back to Iran at all costs."

As the banker in charge of some of Iran's most delicate economic operations, Mr Ashtari is believed to have been privy to information the Tehran regime would rather not have disclosed. "As soon as Mr Ashtari is safe, he will explain these scandals in detail," the dissident group's statement said.

Military sources could not

say how many of the radar-guided missiles Iran had, but

they said they could be mounted

on patrol boats, allowing them to be moved freely in the waterway. The missiles have a range of 60 miles.

American forces clashed several times with Iranian units during the Iran-Iraq War when both sides attacked Gulf shipping.

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Critics of £440m aid for ailing airline say decision flies in face of fair competition

Britain considers legal challenge to Iberia handout

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

THE British Government may mount a legal challenge to the European Commission's decision to let Iberia, Spain's national airline, receive another £440 million in state aid.

Tony Newton, the Leader of the House, told the Commons yesterday that the Government had not ruled out such a challenge. "This seems to us at best a weak decision which threatens to undermine all our efforts to establish fair competition in the Community aviation market," he said.

Tory MPs, who expressed their anger at the handout yesterday, claim that Iberia is a state monolith, still in the grip of powerful unions, nepo-

tistic, protected, inefficient and uncaring of the needs of its passengers. Spain's state-owned giant has, they say, failed to come to terms with the new Europe, it is bureaucratic and cosseted by a chauvinistic Government anxious only to "fly the flag".

Iberia, they claim, not only pays many of its staff — especially its pilots — ridiculously high salaries, but distorts competition by cutting fares to unrealistic levels, safe in the knowledge that they lose money the Government will bail them out.

Many pilots joke that negotiation is so engrained on the airline that the flight deck of an Iberian jet is the closest

thing to heaven because the son is always sitting at the right hand of the father.

Other critics say that, having been given European Commission approval in 1992 for £600 million of state money, the lumbering airline has formally been given the go-ahead to receive another £450 million and an understanding that they will get another £100 million from the Spanish Government next year.

However, Iberia considers much of the criticism from the likes of British Airways and British Midland to be based on a misunderstanding of the Spanish tradition that senior staff ensure that their children and other relatives are in line for a job when one arises.

Iberia says that because Spain is on the periphery of Europe, it cannot compete with the dominant northern airlines such as BA. It does not have a global network of routes and often has to fly on unprofitable ones.

The airline is also smarting under the domination of the holiday market by British and German charter operators which are, with typical Spanish hospitality, welcomed with open arms.

The money Iberia has received is not state aid, the airline argues, but has been raised by Tesa, the quasi-governmental holding organisation that has sold other state-owned enterprises and is using the proceeds to keep Iberia alive until its restructuring plan can take effect.

The planned changes are

tough and will mean that

most of the airline's own

investments will have to be

disposed of. At least 5,000 staff

will have been laid off between

1991 and 1999; a pay freeze is in force; almost 20 aircraft are going to be sold; and tight new productivity targets will have to be met while the Commission keeps a careful watch on how the extra money is spent.

It was an argument which swayed Neil Kinnock, the Transport Commissioner. Britain's airlines are waiting until a transcript of the Commission's decision is available before deciding whether to take their case to the European Court as they did with

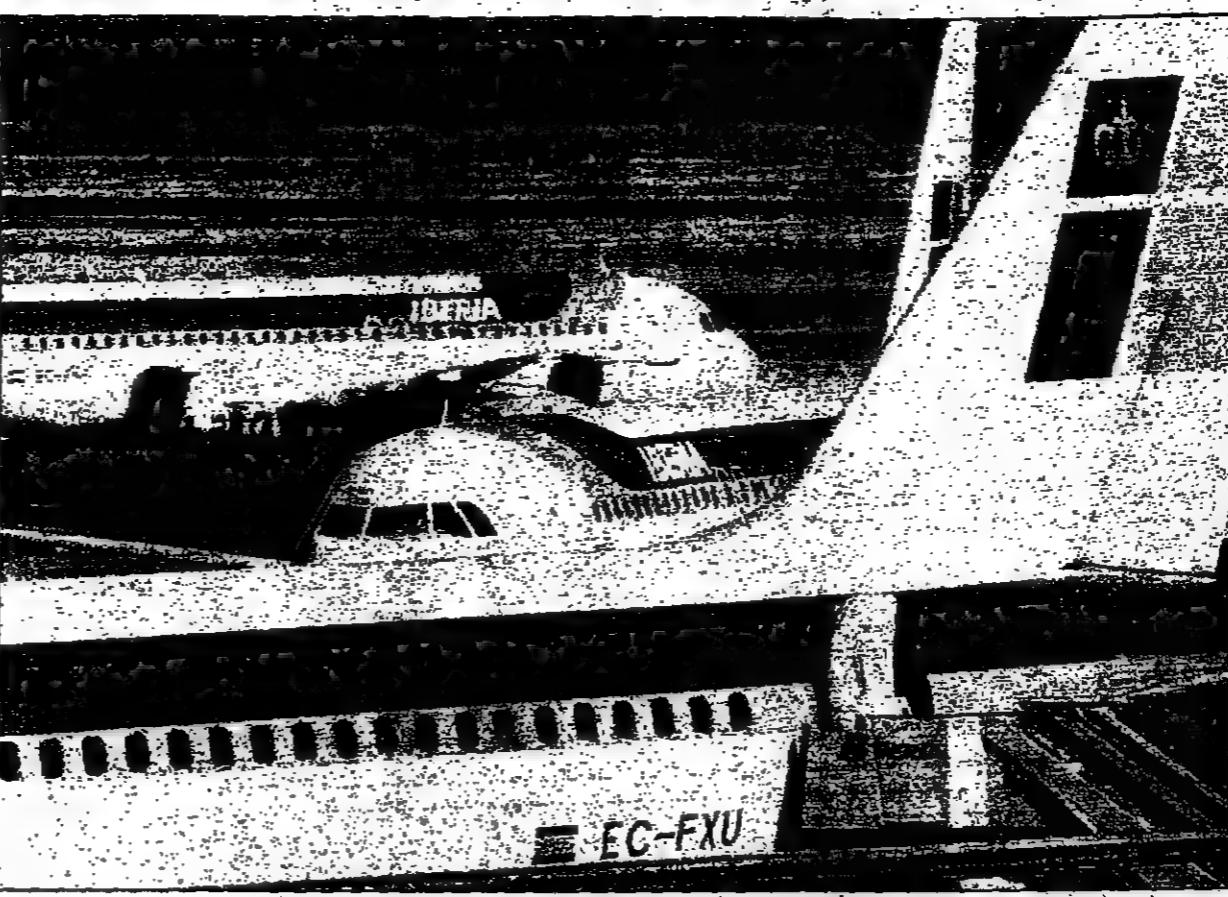
Air France. But with other state-owned airlines lining up to follow Iberia's path to Mr Kinnock's door, the British are determined to prevent any further handouts.

Swissair is the only other large European scheduled carrier which is wholly privately owned. Lufthansa is rapidly shedding its state holding and becoming more aggressive in its marketing. Olympic, Air Lingus, Air France and TAP Portugal are like Iberia 100 per cent state-owned. Alitalia

has an 86.4 per cent state holding, Sabena 62 per cent; Finnair 50 per cent; Austrian 52 per cent; SAS 50 per cent; and KLM 38 per cent.

Since 1991 six European airlines have received capital injections through their governments of more than £7 billion, which private airlines could not have raised. Where, British companies are asking, is the promised "level playing field" in European aviation?

Lending article, page 17



Part of Iberia's fleet at Madrid airport. About 20 aircraft are to be sold and a pay freeze has been imposed.

HOW BA BEATS IBERIA

Shareholders	BRITISH AIRWAYS - IBERIA
Turnover	£24.754
Debt	£27.000
Operating profit	£281 million
Pre-tax profit	£227 million
Aircraft	283
Passengers	30.5 million
Average loads	71.6 per cent
Destinations	169
Flights per day	1,000
Employees	53,000
	23,576

National interests prevail in Brussels battles for state subsidies

BRUSSELS yesterday shrugged off the row over the EU Commission's decision to allow the Spanish state to shovel £440 million into Iberia. Officials acknowledged, however, that, copping on top of a string of similar cases, the Iberia rescue has damaged the Commission's credibility.

"We got a pretty good deal considering the pressures involved," said an official close to the bargaining that resulted in the Commission approving the second big funding for Iberia in four years, despite its policy that loss-makers can only get one lot of state aid.

Neil Kinnock, the Transport Commissioner who is responsible for the airline industry, was taking

comfort from the argument that his team had squeezed down Iberia's initial demand for a sum some 60 per cent higher and imposed stringent terms for restructuring which have not gone down well in Spain. They also emphasised their finding that the case did not involve direct state aid but a commercial investment by a state-controlled holding company. The argument has set industry experts chortling.

Mr Kinnock's uneasy perfor-

mance when he explained the deal on Tuesday suggested a man whose free-market principles, proclaimed with fervour when he arrived in Brussels a year ago, had come off the worse from 12 months in office. A similar weathering has afflicted Karel van Miert, the Flemish Socialist who polices state aid in industries apart from transport.

So much national interest is at stake in such decisions that political considerations prevail. As one offi-

cial said: "There was just no way that Brussels was going to put to death a national flag-carrier, however lame it looks."

Such realism helped to swing Sir Leon Brittan, Britain's senior commissioner and former competition chief, behind the Iberia decision, which was taken unanimously by the 20 commissioners. Some officials dismissed the British criticism as a refection of the "Europhobia" in the Conservative Government. "They would have been screaming in the other direction if the Commission had scuppered some cherished British institution," one said.

Felipe González, the Spanish Prime Minister, had campaigned during his presidency of the EU in

the past six months to ensure that two big state rescues went through. There were Iberia and £250 million of aid to Seat, Volkswagen's loss-making Spanish subsidiary. Two years ago, the might of the French state was brought to bear to win approval for £2.4 billion for Air France, £5.5 billion for Credit Lyonnais and £1.3 billion for Groupe Bull, the nationalised computer firm. Other airlines queuing up successfully at the till are Greece's Olympic, Air Portugal and Air Lingus.

British officials note, has lobbied for itself in two recent subsidy cases. Mr Van Miert's department is on the verge of approving most of an £80 million package in which

British taxpayers will help to finance a new Jaguar plant at Castle Bromwich, Birmingham. Without the money, Ford, Jaguar's American parent, said it would switch production to America. Delays in the approval were ascribed by some in Whitehall to annoyance in Brussels over the Government's obstruction in other EU decisions.

In the other case, Brussels last year backed a British grant of £61 million, contested by UK Clothing companies to a Northern Ireland

textile plant.

Officials say the Commission's decisions have been influenced by a climate in which the fear of unemployment has become the paramount force on the Continent.

Spain to champion teaching of English

FROM EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

SPAIN has launched one of the most advanced language programmes in Europe for state schools. Within three years, most pupils at state infant schools will start to learn English from the age of three and will continue until leaving secondary school, studying a syllabus provided by the British Council, with exam results recognised in Britain.

The breakthrough by the council has been achieved despite an increase of competition in language teaching and severe cuts in its budget which will lead to the loss of resources and staff.

David Brighty, the British Ambassador in Madrid, and Jerónimo Saavedra, the Minister of Education and Science, signed an agreement for the British Council to oversee the syllabus, provide materials and recruit English teachers for 43 state schools in Spain with a total of 10,000 pupils.

Senior Saavedra said 900 Spanish state schools would introduce the council's English-teaching programme, starting with the country's youngest pupils from September. His ministry is spending about £500,000 on the pilot scheme, which will primarily benefit children in poor city suburbs whose parents cannot afford the private English lessons that many rich Spanish children take. Many later go to British, Irish or American universities.

"The earlier the start in bilingual education, the better," said Ray Holliday, the headmaster of the British Council school in Madrid. Ministers in the Socialist Government have had no qualms about sending their children to the school, which has 1,776 pupils and fees of about £5,000 a year.

However, cuts of £2 million in the council's international budget mean that at least ten administrators in Madrid will be lost.

"We still teach English to about 17,000 Spaniards around Spain," said Peter Taylor, regional director-general of the council, "but we have been hit by improved teaching of English in schools and more competition."

Italy gets new Prime Minister

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

PRESIDENT SCALFARO yesterday ended weeks of political stalemate by nominating Antonio Maccanico, a highly respected bureaucrat and constitutional expert to head a broad-based Government of National Unity in Italy.

The lira rose immediately, and Signor Maccanico said he hoped his economic programme would enable the firm to rejoin the exchange-rate mechanism.

If Signor Maccanico succeeds in forming a government the move will avoid disruptive elections during Italy's presidency of the European Union which lasts until

June. It will also provide Italy with a breathing space during which the stalled constitutional reforms begun three years ago can be carried through.

Sources close to the coalition talks reported last night that the Maccanico reform programme included proposals for a "French style" direct election of the Italian President.

At present the head of state is elected by parliament and is largely a figurehead, although he plays a key role in coalition negotiations.

Any such change to the constitution would need a two-thirds majority in parliament. The details of the proposal have yet to be made clear.

Many Italians have reservations about investing too much power in one person, a legacy of the Mussolini dictatorship.

Signor Scalfaro, looked relieved, and said that patience had paid off. His move comes after weeks of speculation after the resignation on January 11 of Lamberto Dini, the interim Prime Minister appointed just over a year ago after the collapse of the centre-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi, the leader of Forza Italia.

Signor Scalfaro's aim is to end the instability caused by an apparently endless series of weak coalitions known as "revolving door" govern-

ments. Signor Maccanico's administration will be Italy's 55th government since the Second World War.

The outcome is a setback for Gianfranco Fini, the leader of the "post-Fascist" Alleanza Nazionale, who almost alone among the main party leaders had held out for elections. Opinion polls suggested that he would have gained votes, whereas Signor Berlusconi, who is on trial for corruption, would have lost ground as would the parties of the Centre Left. Signor Scalfaro played on these fears by threatening to call an election unless the parties came to terms.

Signor Fini nonetheless joined other party leaders in giving the Maccanico appointment a cautious welcome, saying the Prime Minister designate had "always acted impartially".

Signor Maccanico will today begin to try to form a Cabinet. It will include the key parties of both Left and Right, but is unlikely to include the Northern League led by Umberto Bossi, who yesterday remarked caustically that Maccanico sounded like mechat in Italian and that the new Prime Minister was yet another "technocrat" rather than a real politician.

Signor Maccanico said he hoped his Government would enjoy "solid and serious" backing and could continue the reform begun in 1993, when Italy adopted a partial first-past-the-post electoral system, in conjunction with proportional representation.



Maccanico: adept at backroom politics

Shadowy 'fixer' takes top job

By RICHARD OWEN

LIKE his predecessor Lamberto Dini, Antonio Maccanico has the reputation of being a technocrat and is hence a suitable candidate to pursue Italy's reform process.

However, unlike Signor Dini, who alienated politicians while in office, Signor Maccanico has some hope of gaining all party backing. Now 71, he has spent a lifetime in the background of Italian politics, and as one observer noted: "He knows where the bodies are buried."

After years at the elbow of successive Italian leaders as a "fixer", Signor Maccanico has instant access to the most powerful figures in Italy. He was leader between April 1993 and May 1994.

Born in August 1924 near Naples, Signor Maccanico studied law at Pisa. He became a parliamentary official in 1947 at the age of 23, when Italy was reshaping its democratic structure after Mussolini's period of fascism. Except for a one-year stint as a banker, he has been a career politician.

He acquired the nickname "The Mechanic", not only as a play on his name but also because of his skill in manipulating the government machine.

Now, Herr Kohl wants Germans to take only three weeks' care every four years. If the care lasts longer, the patient will have to sacrifice part of his or her annual holiday.

This could hit us very badly," said a spokesman for Germany's spa resorts, which have been benefiting from unusually generous provisions allowing ordinary workers to take the waters. Some

civil servants have been taking cures every two years, with the cost paid by the state health insurance and their salary paid by the employer as usual. Now Herr Kohl wants Germans to take only three weeks' care every four years. If the care lasts longer, the patient will have to sacrifice part of his or her annual holiday.

The most fashionable spas, such as Baden-Baden, were usually out of financial reach — hotel costs were not always paid — but scores of minor German resorts, almost always identified by the prefix Bad (bath), rediscovered old

Spa cures run dry in Kohl's painful cuts

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

GERMAN workers, particularly the rheumatic ones accustomed to regular, paid spa cures, were yesterday up in arms about plans by Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, to cut social welfare spending to keep the country on target for monetary union.

This could hit us very badly," said a spokesman for Germany's spa resorts, which have been benefiting from unusually generous provisions allowing ordinary workers to take the waters. Some

mineral springs and set themselves up as centres of restorative medicine. Doctors have usually been understanding in signing release forms for a cure.

The fact is that Herr Kohl's package is designed more to encourage and stimulate small businesses than prompt workers to work harder. Unemployment benefit will be available for longer than one year only to those older than 45 years. Previously the lower age limit was 42.

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Transatlantic alliance is vital for European security, French President tells Congress

Chirac calls for reform of Nato's military role

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CHIRAC, on the first state visit to America by a French leader in 12 years, yesterday proposed a transatlantic charter to reform Nato and place more responsibility for security on Europe.

In his address to a joint session of Congress before talks with President Clinton, M Chirac called for a renewed partnership between the United States and its Nato allies. He said American commitment, both militarily and politically, was still essential to the stability and security of a growing Europe, but he emphasised that Washington need not always play an active role.

"The best security today lies in solidarity," said M Chirac after receiving a standing ovation from the Republican majority on Capitol Hill. "The reform of Nato must also enable the European allies to assume fully their responsibilities, with the support of Nato facilities, wherever the United States does not wish to engage its ground forces."

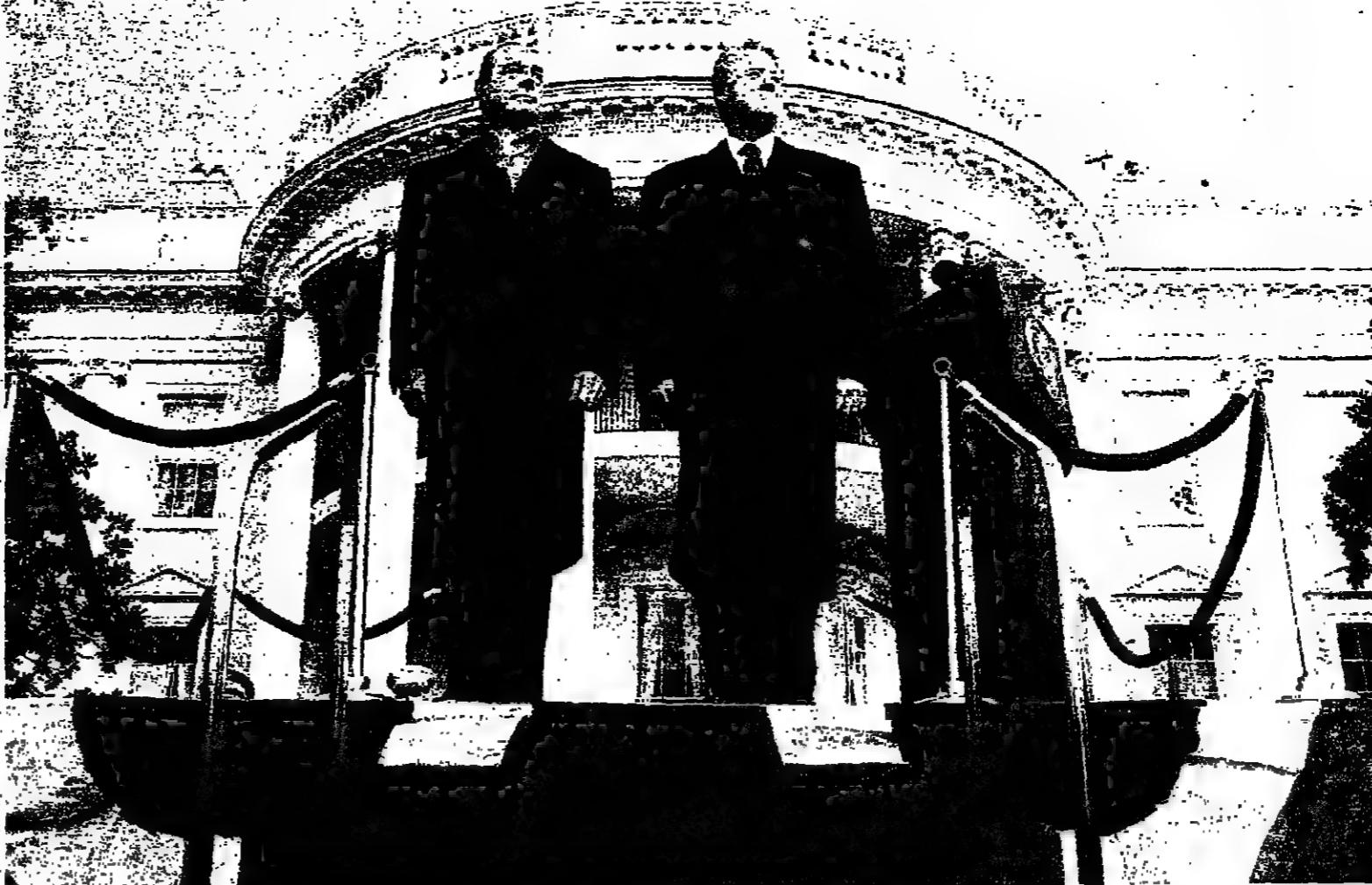
Thirty years after de Gaulle had withdrawn French forces from Nato, he said, France was once more at the heart of the alliance. In reforming

Nato, the French President recommended the adoption of a charter as a "solemn sign of the vitality of our alliance" and a pillar of global leadership in the 21st century.

An enlarged European Union and a single currency would be a natural part of European progression. Already, M Chirac said, there was a balance between the two continents with three million Europeans working in American companies and the same number of Americans working in Europe.

The joint military action in Bosnia-Herzegovina between Britain, France and America underscored the need for Nato to adapt similarly in terms of security. "To a universe that is no longer that in which it was born," M Chirac said, "I call for a renewed partnership between Europe, engaged in its own construction, including in the field of defence, and our North American allies."

A number of Democrats yesterday boycotted the address yesterday, claiming that M Chirac's "proclamation" on Monday to abandon nuclear tests had come too late in the wake of six French experiments in the South Pacific. He



President Chirac, left, and President Clinton outside the White House yesterday during the ceremony to welcome the first French leader in 12 years

nevertheless received warm applause after making a pledge that France had finished its nuclear testing "once and for all".

Republicans have long admired the "bulldozer" style of M Chirac's foreign policy which, before recent American intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina, had been a refreshing contrast to the wavering image of Mr Clinton. For his part, M Chirac has been a

aunch admirer of America since his sojourn in the United States as a student at Harvard in 1953. He washed dishes at Howard Johnson, was briefly engaged to a girl from South Carolina who called him "honey chile" and wound up in New Orleans courting such jazz greats as Cab Calloway.

Despite the warmth of his reception, particularly from Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, M Chirac touched on

several areas which will undermine the more radical isolationist programme of some Republicans long opposed to American intervention in the world and still resentful of M Chirac for his influential role in reversing American policy over Bosnia.

Insisting that America resist any temptation towards unilateralism, the French leader said that Europe offered three times the amount of foreign

aid as the United States. Citing threats from Aids and disasters like Chernobyl, illegal immigration, religious fanaticism and ethnic hatred, M Chirac said the biggest threat was underdevelopment.

It was a moral obligation for the West, he said, to help the poorest nations of the world to prosper. He urged Congress to support the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation and other international bodies

that brought the alliance closer together diplomatically and in terms of trade.

The address, the fourth by a French President since the Second World War, was conducted in French, a language that was audibly absent from the White House menu last night. Under Hillary Clinton, state dinner menus are written in English rather than in the French used in the Reagan and Bush years.

Mugabe faces poll challenge

Harare: President Mugabe lost the chance of a walkover in his quest for a third term as Zimbabwe's executive head of state when officials accepted the challenges put forward by Abel Muzorewa, 71, who was Prime Minister of Rhodesia, and Ndabaningi Sithole, 77, the veteran African nationalist leader (Michael Hartnett writes). Observers say neither has a chance of defeating Mr Mugabe.

Bahrain expels Iranian envoy

Bahrain, shaken by demonstrations, expelled an Iranian diplomat for spying (Michael Binyon writes). The Government has virtually named Iran as the instigator of the riots, largely by Shia groups which have called for a restoration of the 1973 constitution. Three dissident Muslim clerics, trained in Iran, were expelled in December 1994.

Dissident in line for peace prize

Peking: China criticised the nomination of Wei Jingheng, a leading Chinese dissident, for the Nobel Peace Prize (James Pringle writes). It said Mr Wei, sentenced to 14 years' jail last December, was a convicted criminal and not qualified for such an award.

He was nominated by 81 members of the US Congress and Japanese politicians.

The father of all ambitions

Jerusalem: A man who has 42 children in the United Arab Emirates, aims to be the country's biggest father (Christopher Walker writes). "If God wills, I may get 60 sons," Salim Juma Mubarak told the daily *Khalas* Times. His three wives are all expecting babies. He has 22 sons.

Botched brewery visit fails to refresh flagging Dole

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

ROBERT DOLE'S handlers arranged for the 72-year-old presidential candidate to visit a New Hampshire brewery late on Wednesday, then abruptly cancelled the engagement when they discovered it produced a beer called "Old Man Ale".

Hours later the visit was restored after Steve Merrill, New Hampshire's Governor and leading Dole supporter, argued that to be seen ducking the age issue would look even worse. Mr Dole gamely held up a bottle of "Old Man Ale" for the cameras, tasted it, and declared it "young and fresh".

This botched outing underscored how everything is suddenly going wrong for Mr Dole after months as the Republicans' undisputed frontrunner. A *Boston Globe* poll yesterday gave Steve Forbes, the free-spending publishing tycoon, a nine-point lead over Mr Dole in New Hampshire with less than three weeks until that state's primary. A second, more reli-

able poll gave Mr Dole a six-point lead over Mr Forbes, but everyone agrees the race has narrowed dramatically over the past few days.

In Washington, Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, further boosted Mr Forbes' credibility by praising him as a "genius risk taker" and challenging the conventional wisdom that a political outsider cannot win the Republican nomination.

The Republican party's worries go beyond producing a viable presidential nominee; however, Exit poll showed it lost Tuesday's Senate by-election in Oregon because women — infuriated by Republican assaults on social programmes, abortion rights and Hillary Clinton — turned out in unprecedented force and voted heavily Democratic.

National polls confirm that the "gender gap" has widened to historic proportions since the Republicans seized Capitol Hill in 1994 and this could cost the party dearly in November.

Tokyo: Police arrested nine Buddhist monks yesterday on suspicion of organising swindles that may total £200 million (Peregrine Hodson writes). Two of the men are accused of demanding cash for exorcising "bad spirits", including the souls of abort-

A *Wall Street Journal* poll in December showed men equally divided between Mr Clinton and Mr Dole, but women backing the President by 54 per cent to 36. They overwhelmingly considered social problems such as education and poverty more important than the Republican priority of deficit reduction.

A principal reason the Republicans won Congress in 1994 was a low female vote with a majority of white women voting Republican. Mr Clinton won the White House in 1992 with just 46 per cent of the women's vote. In 1976 men and women voted in identical percentages for Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter.

Brother Nishikawa is alleged to have developed a lucrative sideline selling images of the Buddha to women who had abortions, cashing in on their sense of guilt and superstition.

Monks held over foetus 'swindle'

Death toll mounts as seized Tamils name suicide bomber

FROM VIJITHA YAPA IN COLOMBO

THE death toll in the bombing at the Central Bank building in Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital, rose to 81 yesterday.

Two of the attackers, captured by the public as they fled from the scene on Wednesday, told police that they were members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The two men, known as Rasu and Kitu, said the suicide lorry driver was called Raju.

According to Japanese Buddhist belief, the souls inhabit a neither world and prayers, offerings and monetary donations are necessary to help them to a better world.

Gishnu Nishikawa, a senior monk at Myokanji temple in Wakayama prefecture, and Keijiro Yano, who heads Monganj Temple in Nagoya, were arrested on suspicion of fraud. Another seven monks have been arrested in related frauds and swindles at 27 temples throughout Japan.

Brother Nishikawa is alleged to have developed a lucrative sideline selling images of the Buddha to women who had abortions, cashing in on their sense of guilt and superstition.

It is significant that for the first time after a major bomb explosion, the Government did not rush to impose a curfew. The people reacted calmly and members of the minority Tamil community said they did not feel threatened, but were frightened.

The attempt by successive governments to show that terrorism by a few individuals should not be used to condemn the minority Tamil community seems to have succeeded.

The Governor of the Central Bank, A S Jayewardene, said that money in the vaults was safe as were certain vital documents. The activities of the bank would be back to normal in a few days. Mr Jayewardene said that of the bank's 2,300 employees, about 1,800 worked in the bombed building. He said 40 of their staff had died and 152 were

injured. Banks and business houses functioned as normal yesterday except for those in the immediate area of the blast. But traffic on the main road past the president's residence of Temple Trees, near the British High Commission, which was reduced to one lane each way from last year, will be further restricted. Only cars will be allowed to use the road from Friday.

Meanwhile, hospital authorities said 53 of the 81 dead had so far been identified. Soldiers and firemen who began clearing the rubble yesterday feared there may be more bodies buried under the wreckage, though the chances of finding anyone alive was described as "very remote".

Hospital authorities said the majority of the more than 1,400 people injured were treated for cuts from glass. Doctors at the Government General Hospital said they had never experienced so many people needing medical attention simultaneously, but that they had coped.

Videos put the fire back into smoking

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK



How Dumbell viewed glamour in the 1950s

SMOKERS in America, besieged by the anti-smoking lobby and clean-air fanatics, are buoying their morale by watching "cigarette videos".

The 30-minute films, distributed discreetly among addicts of the weed, show women doing little more than smoking a succession of cigarettes. In modern America there are few things more wicked.

Edward Luissier, a shopkeeper from Oklahoma City, has made a selection of eight films which are selling in increasing numbers to embattled smokers. The \$16 (£16) movies feature fully clad women lighting up and then smoking as many as ten cigarettes. The films concentrate on

smoking techniques, such as the "French inhale", once popular on the silver screen. The smoke is exhaled momentarily from the mouth, and then inhaled briskly up the nostrils. Some of Mr Luissier's films dwell on packet opening, or the tapping out of the first cigarette.

Mr Luissier, 42, who learned to appreciate Winston cigarettes while a sergeant in the US army, took his inspiration from hazy memories of New York in the 1950s. "I have tried to recreate all those elegant women who used to smoke, wearing veiled hats and opera gloves," he said yesterday. He researched the photographic techniques of old black-and-white

portraits and invited female friends to sit for his cameras. The films bear their names, for instance Paula and April. His typical customer, he said, is "at the upper end of the bell curve, intellectually".

Mike Williams, editor of a pro-smoking newsletter, *Smoke Signals*, said that a number of such videos were being made, and sold healthily. A very few, made by companies separate from Mr Luissier, contain mildly suggestive moments, but most of them eschew sexuality. Professor Richard Klein, of the French (Gitanes) department of Cornell University, New York, said: "The anti-smoking people have only glamourised smoking."

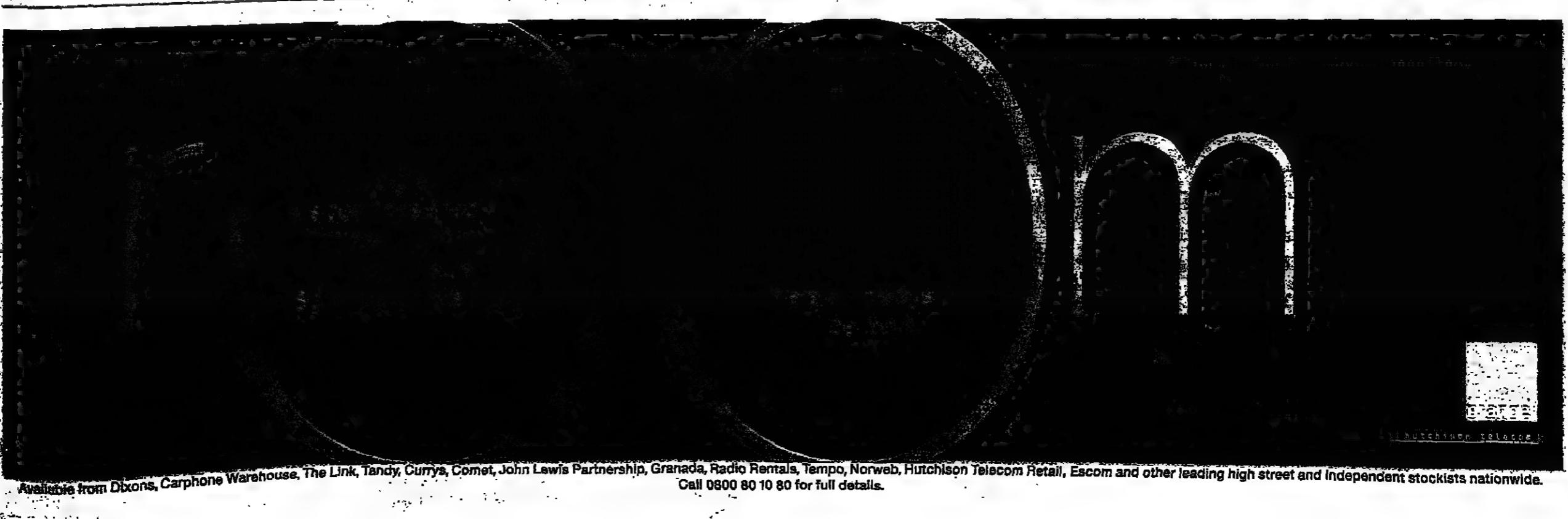
one of the team responsible, says that the galaxy was found when the astronomers were observing an even more distant object, a quasar.

What the astronomers see, he says, is "the shadow of the galaxy in the spectrum of the quasar". The observations, reported in *Astrophysical Research Letters*, enable the galaxy to be dated by measuring its red shift — the amount by which its light is shifted towards the red end of the spectrum.

Dr Barlow said: "This is essentially the highest red-shift galaxy that we've detected, which means it's the closest to the beginning of the universe".

The newly discovered galaxy has some similarities to more recent galaxies, including the Milky Way. But the galaxy has quantities of carbon, oxygen, silicon, aluminium and iron only one half to 1 per cent of those in the Milky Way. This confirms that the light we are seeing came from the galaxy when it was very young, and had not had time for the stars it contains to generate heavier elements.

Space frontier pushed back

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

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Small body, big voice, big heart

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



Thomas Quasthoff is a world-class singer first — and a thalidomide victim second

The most remarkable thing about Thomas Quasthoff is his voice. Not just his singing voice, but his speaking voice, which is rich and deep, punctuated with bursts of stentorian laughter that seem fantastically vigorous coming from one so small.

Wednesday night's applause, at the end of his London debut recital at the Wigmore Hall, was tumultuous. As he walked on stage and began to sing Schubert's *Grämymed*, tears started in many eyes. He gave us Prometheus, the Erl-King, the Dwarf. His choice of songs — especially sardonic, perhaps, was Goethe's *Grenzen der Menschheit* ("Man's Limitations"): "For no mortal shall measure himself against the gods" — affected the audience deeply, and set them pondering on the courageous spirit of a singer who has overcome the most daunting of limitations.

Quasthoff was born near Hanover in 1959. His mother had taken thalidomide (the drug prescribed to combat morning sickness in pregnancy, which resulted in terrible growth defects in otherwise perfectly healthy babies) and Thomas was an early victim. "A pioneer," he says with a burst of laughter, "a nice word for a bad fact." His tiny hands grow straight from his shoulders. His legs are dwarfishly short. But his lungs are strong,



Thomas Quasthoff couldn't study at a music college because the rules insisted that students of singing must also play an instrument, and there were no concessions for a boy without arms

his face is handsome, his mind razor-sharp, he is the most wholeheartedly enthusiastic man you could meet and, of course, he has this extraordinary voice.

Nobody could spend a lifetime dwelling on misfortune and he is quick to dismiss the subject — after a brief passing reference to the powerful pharmaceutical industry that allowed a drug to be marketed even after it was suspected of causing disability. "That is what you call capitalism I think. Hah hah!" He has to live with "the fact" every day. So he

is thankful for his voice, and for loving parents who encouraged him.

He started as a boy soprano in a choir at 14. There was constant music at home piano, saxophone, clarinet; he grew up hearing Mozart and Bach, his elder brother's Jethro Tull records, his own collection of jazz. He wanted to study at a music college, but the rules insisted that students of singing must also play a musical instrument. No special concession could be made for a boy without arms. Instead, he read law at university, and later worked in broadcasting.

But he never gave up singing; he took private lessons, and is glad of it. "I have had time to develop my voice in quiet, and not be influenced by the intrigues of the music high school. Others study for three or four years, then go in large opera houses and have to sing parts that are much too difficult for their voices, and their careers are often very short."

He owes his technique to a brilliant voice teacher, Charlotte Lehmann. "And I think my way of singing is very influenced by my own life, my own feelings, troubles, happiness. At 36 I am intelligent enough to know what is important and what is not."

The turning point in his life was 1988, when he won first prize in the ARD International Music Competition in Munich. "I ask myself, do I win this competition because I am talented? Or do I have a bonus for my disability? But I think my life since then is a confirmation of the jury's decision. Sometimes a person wins a competition and after a few years, nobody remembers the name."

His hands flutter expressively as he talks. "I am able, really. I am ABLE, to enjoy. And that makes my life very rich. I am a very gifted person. Blessed, I mean."

One blessing is his gregariousness. "If you are not in a good relationship with nature, and with other people, if you are not positive and able to love, then you will never be a good artist, never. It is a symbiosis. If you are an unfriendly, ignoring person, don't be a singer. If you are cold, you have a cold voice."

The warmth of his personality captivated the English Chamber Orchestra, with whom he did a Mediterranean music cruise last summer. I am told Quasthoff flung himself into shipboard life — swimming, drinking, playing table tennis. And after the Wigmore concert, in the green room, friends flung themselves down on the floor to hug and kiss him.

"The first time I come into the concert hall, I know people think, 'Oh my God, this disability, oh my God.' But that is completely over when I start to sing. And then, it is not just that they say 'There is such power in his voice' — there must be something else that I cannot describe. The audience must think: 'Something happens.' It is for the audience to say what it is."

He believes that conquering disability must have given him an added sensitivity. "Because it's work to accept disability, and it's not a work that ever finishes. At the moment I have a normal life. I am a successful person. I am very independent, and I get the gift to be loved, the biggest present you can get, bigger than the most successful concert."

The next opportunity we have to hear him is on March 12 at the Barbican, in the presence of the Prince of Wales, when he will sing Mozart with the English Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Pinchas Zukerman. He will also sing Britten's *War Requiem* in Edinburgh this

August. He is busy in demand; booked to work via Sir Simon Rattle and Sir Colin Davis later this year.

"Our professional life is not always easy. I love my job but I don't love the business. If I only work with music I have the most beautiful profession in the world, but the bad fact is that agents want money — not in my case, Tania Collette is not only a wonderful agent but a good critic — but some agents think not about the singer but rather that he is good for the agency."

I don't want to get famous. I want to work with good conductors, I never want to be a slave of my music life. My private life, my private love, is as important. I don't want to sing 120 concerts a year and ask myself when I am 53, where did my life go?

"I am in the world to read, walk, smell, listen, enjoy nature, sit down with the singing of birds and the atmosphere of flowers," (he has a horror of polluted, traffic-clogged cities) "enjoy being with friends, and going to the theatre, and being with my brother, or being alone with books, or being together with my girlfriend."

Sitting with the person you love in the same room, exchanging no words, looking each other in the eyes. The home of my girlfriend is so beautiful to see. How she has arranged the room, so beautiful with old wood, and nice things... He stops himself: "But that is my private life and it is only mine."

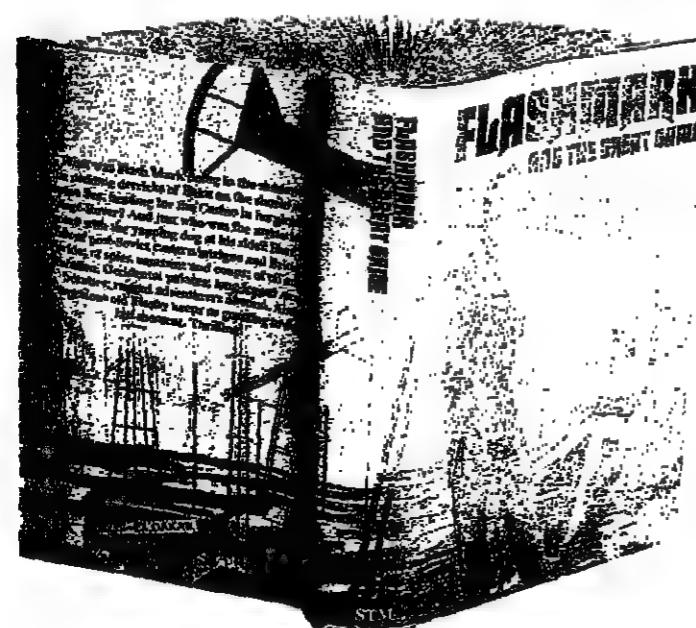
But, he adds, a beautiful room can give peace and pleasure. "A room like this one" (we are in the house of Charles Spencer, the accompanist who has tastefully converted his Victorian house in Kensington) "reminds you there is so much to enjoy in life, literature, theatre. When I am finished singing I will definitely be a rich person, not in money so much, but I am so interested in everything, I am a man who will never in my life sit down in front of the television and say 'Wearily' 'Oh God, let's have a look what's on the other programme'..."

He calls himself a severe critic of other singers. "I am not able to sing every concert in the world for baritone or bass baritone. So I am happy that there are plenty of very good, very beautiful other voices. In Tokyo we had to have a new soprano at the last minute, and when Dorothea Roschmann began to sing at the rehearsal, she was so absolutely brilliant and beautiful it made me cry."

"As I get older, I think somebody up there has a very helping hand to influence my life. Not only in concerts but in my private life I feel that what we call God is very near. Because I've got many presents in my life. I'm thankful every day."

THE SUNDAY TIMES

MARK THATCHER SPIES HIS CHANCE



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Dr Raj Persaud
reports on a
frightening and
violent obsession

With the Home Office considering new measures to deter stalkers, and the police hunting a stalker who raped a woman while she was under their protection, the need to understand this obsessional behaviour is urgent. In 25 per cent of cases stalkers eventually assault their victims.

Although the fan pursuing a celebrity usually grabs the headlines, in half the cases the stalker has had some kind of prior relationship with the victim that has turned sour.

Last year two American clinical psychologists, Dr Reid Meloy and Dr Shayna Gothard, published extensive research into the characteristics of stalkers. The vast majority are men, with an average age of 35; most are unemployed, and 60 per cent have had previous psychiatric treatment.

However, compared with other mentally disordered offenders they are usually better educated and of at least average intelligence — 25 per cent were above-average. Their resourcefulness explains the frequent inability of victims to elude capture.

Meloy and Gothard uncovered chilling cases in which one stalker posed as a police officer to obtain an address from a motor records department, while another decoded unlisted phone numbers of his victim whenever she changed them by using telephone installation equipment. If they are so smart, however, why do they ignore their



How often do stalkers physically assault their quarry?

victims' furious and fearful rejections? They are socially isolated: only one in seven stalkers is married, many have never had a close relationship. Extremely sensitive to personal rejection, their anger at a rebuff often provokes the pursuit, and may provide a defence against loneliness.

But what about the cases where victim and stalker have never met at all? Many adolescents go through a brief stage of obsessiveness following when they pursue pop stars they have never met.

Irrational infatuation of this kind is usually both harmless and temporary, but psychiatrists are aware that a small group pursue those they idolise with an intensity which reflects a disturbed rationality rather than simple admiration. Some of these suffer from erotomania, a sudden conviction that an older person of high social status is in love with them.

The pressing issue for police is to assess which stalkers are likely to be violent. Meloy and Gothard found that the best predictor of a stalker attacking his quarry is a previous history of

have found that if a stalker has delusions about just one person he is likely to be relatively harmless, but if he has delusions about many it strongly predicts violence.

However, the violence is not usually directed at an object of desire, but often those perceived to be standing in the way of the consummation of the relationship. A public figure's partner is particularly vulnerable to violent attack from stalkers of this kind.

The powerful emotional needs which underlie stalking explain why the purveyors themselves often have a paradoxical sense of being controlled by their victim, and even claim they were the one trying to end the relationship.

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Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* has made heroin chic. Giles Coren discovers the depressing reality



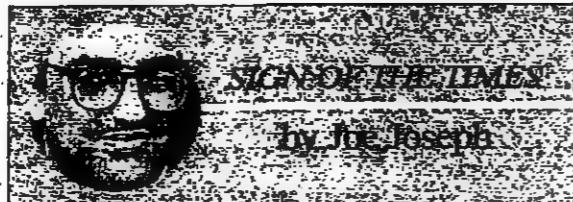
Reformed heroin addict Eamon Doherty acted as a technical adviser on the film

EVEN THAT clever cookie Wittgenstein never solved the eternal riddle that keeps philosophers awake at night: why do children have to have parents?

Or, to put it in technical philosophical jargon: why do some poor kids have to have plonkers for parents who dress them in Timberland shoes, Calvin Klein jeans and Ralph Lauren shirts before taking them off for lunch on Saturdays to a Covent Garden restaurant that isn't designed for two-year-olds?

Few two-year-olds are ready for sophistication. To a two-year-old, grissini are just rusks for the overfed, fried calamari tastes like Chicken McNuggets that have gone off, and fish fingers are a godsend. If God wanted two-year-olds to eat goujons of sole, he would have made all children French.

In France, or Italy, or China you see restaurant tables thronged with lunches spanning three generations, with grandpa sitting calmly next to his grandson. But in England, when certain parents take their children to posh restaurants, it's as if they have stepped through Alice's looking-glass into a topsy-turvy world where children call the shots. Attention, chairs, cutlery, eyes, everything focuses on the child. Like solicitous courtiers re-



Laying the child-king's wishes to the world, parents quiz the child about his desires.

"He wants a Coke," they then bark at the waiter, but double-check just in case. "A Coke? You're sure? What about apple juice instead, poppet?"

YOU CAN always tell if these parents are with their first child, because they will ask the waitress to press the chef for a list of all ingredients, in every dish, for fear of polluting their child's body with preservatives or E-numbers.

These are the same parents who, on long plane journeys, lull their babies to sleep by bumbling African tribal lullabies that someone in their antenatal class told them was the holistic way of soothing their baby to sleep.

By the time their third child comes along, even a Malteser-flavoured pizza that has been on the floor more times than Frank Bruno is regarded as highly nutritious. While on aeroplanes the baby is stuffed with high-dose sleeping

potions the minute the "Faster Seatbelts" sign goes on.

It's true that children are not the only ones who behave boorishly and pratise all day. MPs do it, and we even pay them to. And of course, there are many restaurant-friendly children who will yelp and huri-kangui only in certain emergency situations, such as (a) if they're hungry or (b) if they're thirsty.

Another problem with child lurchers is that they can't distinguish between "laughing at" and "laughing with", which is irritating when you want to make a specific point of laughing at them in what you regard as a superior, adult sort of way. Also, kids never have any spicy gossip.

But many adults don't mind such company. They look at a rich, spoilt child squawking "I prefer the chips at Le Caprice", and all they see is someone who is probably easy to decease at poker. But don't count on junior's generosity. However big a kid's trust fund, somehow he never picks up the lunch tab.

Why drug addiction is not a style issue

February 23 sees the opening of *Trainspotting*. The film, based on Irvine Welsh's 1993 cult novel, and made by the same team as last year's biggest film, *Shallow Grave*, follows a group of friends through the highs and lows of heroin addiction.

It involves violence, death and the betrayal of friends. So far, so standard. The difference with this film is that while it highlights the pain of heroin addiction, it also makes no attempt to hide the pleasure. And for that reason it is certain to cause controversy.

Already, it has resulted in heroin addiction becoming a style issue. In the magazines considered essential reading among those who think themselves young and hip, there is an uncomfortable element of "heroin chic". In this week's edition of *The Face*, for example, the star of the film, Ewan McGregor, is pictured in wasted fashion, with his physical appearance as an addict described as follows: "To accurately portray junkie and Pot Noodle boy Mark Renton, McGregor has lost nearly two stone and shaved his head. He looks shit and looks great." It is hip, in other words, to be hooked. The piece is called "Hey hey it's the junkies".

On another page, an article about the soundtrack to the film — which is expected to be a huge seller in its own right — is headlined "Smacksonic".

And yet *Time Out* puts McGregor on its front cover, handsome and haunted, with the words, "Take the best orgasm you ever had. Multiply it by a thousand. You're still nowhere near it". Yes, they are lines from the book, but the book surrounds them with 300 pages of grim reality. *Time Out* exploits only the sex appeal. Irvine Welsh never meant for this. And nor, one assumes, did the film-makers.

Honesty, they insist, was a primary concern. Their quest for verisimilitude took them to Glasgow, although the book is set in Edinburgh, because the drug scene there is closer to the way the Scottish capital was in the mid-1980s, when the story is set.

They even used a technical adviser, reformed addict Eamon Doherty, a counsellor at Glasgow's Calton Athletic rehabilitation project. His story is anything but chic.

He was a heroin addict for seven years; his brother died of an overdose last April.

"He started when he was 15, about a year before me," says Eamon, who speaks with evangelical enthusiasm. "He would have been 33 now, but he knew what he was doing. It's no use complaining. I got into it myself through other drugs I had been doing since I was 12 or 13. I thought it was great at first, when I had the money. And then I started on selling drugs, and stealing from my family, and my standards went the same way as my stereo and all my other possessions."

"Then I had a collapse just before my 18th birthday, and spent nine weeks in hospital with septicaemia. They had a priest in to give me the last rites. And when I recovered, I was back on it as soon as I got out. After that it was no fun anymore. I was just doing it to get normal. It was seven years before I stopped."

On the film set Eamon supervised the injection scenes — into prosthetic arms — and helped the actors to tune their physical reactions to the drug. "The film was so realistic it was frightening," says 24-year-old Danny Jackson, another former addict. "It took me right back to the days when I was on it. All of us from the club who saw it felt the same. The first feelings were that good, the reality of it was that bad."

E amon says: "If I was making the film, I would end with rehabilitation. But then no one would go and see it. Who would they? Nobody wants to go and see a man sitting in his room talking about his problems. When I spoke to *The Face* I had no idea they would do this. They've tried to write down my accent. It's all 'och ay'e the noo' if I was thick or something."

"They might think Ewan McGregor looks good," he says, "but in truth if he was really an addict he'd be physically, mentally and spiritually dead. You don't eat or wash. Your whole body breaks down 82 per cent of jiggers [addicts who inject] here have



Ewan McGregor as Spud and Ewan McGregor as Mark Renton in *Trainspotting*

hepatitis C, and they say only 1 per cent are HIV positive. Well, they are transmitted in the same way, and HIV has been around longer. So you can work it out for yourself."

The mood at the rehabilitation project is upbeat, but the stories are dismal. David Main, 24, played football for Celtic under-18s and the Scottish youth team. Then he was on the drugs, missed a trial for the Celtic senior team, and it was all over. He is the same age as Ryan Giggs.

If their stories are sad, sadder still are the ones of those still dependent on heroin. An hour or so before addict Joey passed out, he had been selling copies of the *Big Issue* at Glasgow Central Station. Like 90 per cent of Glasgow's vendors, he sells the magazine to pay for his addiction.

From the station he walked to Posil to buy his Dan Mac ("Dan Mac, man, Smack"). He had looked drawn and hollow at the station, a dozen miserably hard years older than his

31. We talk in a tenement block, where the windows are not glass but sheet steel. "Welcome to the real world," Joey says. "This is the badlands. I love it here. Dodging the bairns and all. That's what it's all about."

"But I've got my kit. And nobody can take it off me. I've got 43 stiches here in my face, 30 on the outside, 13 on the inside. They gave it to me two months ago, but they didn't get my kit. And they didn't get it when they used a machete, or here [he shows the scar in his back], or here [in his abdomen]. I'm only nine stone, and I'm sick. But no one has ever got my kit," Joey says.

H e dives into the washbag he carries with him everywhere and pulls out a medical swab. "They give you these at the needle exchange to clean your arm before you inject, but we don't use them for that.

They're full of alcohol, so they burn great for cooking up your kit. I couldn't bang it in my arms. I can't use them for another six months, because I've got no veins left there. And you've got to be careful to hit a vein. Sometimes you think you've hit one, when you haven't, and the next day it swells up like a golf ball. But I cut out all my own abscesses with a knife. I don't bother with doctors." He shows off the abscess scars on his legs, and no one would mistake them for the work of a doctor.

"It was about 1980 when I started jacking. I was living with my ma and dad but most of the time I was in this house with a lot of 25 to 35-year-olds. They were always well out of it, and didn't interest me too much. And then someone said 'Give the wee man a bit'. They put a bit round my arm, and I looked away while they gave me a £2 bit. I was telling them to hurry up and get it over with, and they said 'it's done'. Next thing I came round and I was shitting this 35-year-old

bird. I thought 'this is it', and next night I was round there asking where to get more."

"I was still at school at the time, and soon everyone was doing it, that's how it was then. I worked as a roofer for a time, but when things got really bad I couldn't do that anymore," Joey says.

"So I started stealing. I never rob from my own kind, never from the poor. I go up to Bearsden and King's Park and rob the TV people and the footballers. I'm a regular in the prisons. My last stretch was 18 months, but it's not so bad."

"The kit's easier to get inside than it is outside. Your lumber comes in and you kiss her, she passes it into your mouth, you swallow, and next morning you take it out. And when the book came out and we heard it was about jacking, everyone wanted it. There was a copy on my landing, and it was five months before I got a read."

J oy adds: "It's brilliant. Being an addict is just like it says in the book. I'll never get off it now. My sister died of it two years ago, but my younger sister is 21 and has never smoked a joint. I'm so proud of her, because smack is back now in a bad way."

"For a while the kids were just E-ing, but now they do heroin to come down off the Ecstasy, and it's in all the clubs. They start smoking it, and they think they're not junkies. But when their tolerance gets up, they jag. And that's it. They'll all end like me. It's a sad existence, but I'm not looking for pity. I know what I'm doing. I'm too far gone for that. I'm a lost cause."

He went back to the station, and began his selling again. Another six or seven hours, another £25, another quartergram. That is how life is for him, a cycle of scrounging and injecting, or the horrors of withdrawal. There is nothing else left.

This, according to *The Face*, is "shit and great".

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Philip Howard



■ The critics hate the stage version of *Les Enfants du Paradis* — I'll be there

Despite the rude press, I must go to see *Les Enfants du Paradis* on stage. Usually when the critics sink off in the pub during the last act their excuse to the paying customers they are forcing to stand up for their exent is that they have to catch the early editions. But at the first night of *Les Enfants*, there was a stampede from the Barbican at the long-anticipated interval. And as they fled, the critics sprayed their most patronising insults and I-told-you-so's, and made excuses as feeble as having to make sure that the babysitter knew how to work the television zapper.

So one (perverse) reason for going to *Les Enfants* in the flesh is to see whether any play can be as bad as the critics allege. Usually the Royal Shakespeare Company can turn even such second-division plays as *The Taming of the Shrew* or *Peter Pan* to gold. The company is always interesting, as is Simon Callow. Another reason is that *Les Enfants* really is one of the best movies ever made, even though everyone says that it is. So the stage version got a punning for *les-majesté* from all who would put it in their top ten for solitary viewing on a desert island. For those who play this game, *Bicycle Thieves* is in, of course. For the western, shall it be *High Noon* or *The Unforgiven*? For the Marxists, *Duck Soup* beats *A Night at the Opera* by a short pun. And for the classical-spectacular wild-card choice, *Spartacus* or *Clash of the Titans*? In the modern section, *Strictly Ballroom* or *Babette's Feast*?

Not even the oldest film reviewer can have seen even a twentieth of the films made this century. We amateurs who talk about the cinema more than we go, are limited in our desert-island choices by the few films we have seen, and by our circumstances at the time — of sitting in the crowded dark so wrapped up that we tore our trousers on the seat in front. And for me, *Les Enfants* always comes top. Partly because it has the joy of coming liberating at the end of the war, like that other top ten film, Laurence Olivier's *Henry V*. For the first night of *Les Enfants*, Arletty was in prison as a collaborator for having had a love affair with a Luftwaffe pilot. When reproached, she made the enigmatic reply: "My face belongs to the world, but the rest of me is my own."

But the most interesting reason for getting bottom-cramp at the Barbican is because *Les Enfants* reverses the usual artistic progression. The luvvies are running backwards, uphill. The Darwinian evolution (or devolution) in the media is first the book, then the stage play and then the screenplay.

The novel works through words and the reader's imagination. The stage play works through words and the actor's art. The film works through images and the director's eye. "Don't come too close, you'll see through my talent," as John Gielgud said to the lighting cameraman on the set of *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. The progression used to be, book, play, film — for example from Henry James's *Washington Square* to *The Heiress* in three quantum hops.

It is no surprise that the only art medium perfected by the 20th century has reversed the process. Penguin now publishes the book of the film, and it goes to the top of the bestseller lists. *Sunset Boulevard* and *Grease* may not be your flute of champagne, but both soupy offspring of the movies are packing them in. Stage musicals are being made on the backs of *Animal Crackers* and *La Dolce Vita*, which will test the scriptwriter, for the words are made irrelevant by the pictures. In fact the screenplay is far better for *Les Enfants* than for most titles because it was written by a proper writer, Jacques Prevert. *Paris est tout petit pour ceux qui s'aiment comme nous d'un si grand amour*. The wild romance of "It's so simple, love." And the act-aud-lady Lemire demonstrating why Shakespeare does not go in French: *De l'économie, Horace, de l'économie* misses the tug-of-war of Old Norse monosyllable with Romance tetrasyllabic of "Thrill, Horatio, thrill." I expect *Les Enfants* is better than the rattlesnakes' rattle. And anyway I must see whether Baptiste finds Garance in the carnival crowds at the end. Of course he does.



More socialist than thou

Pig-headed though he may be, there is a quixotic grandeur about Arthur Scargill and his absurd new party

It is difficult to believe that it was only nine months ago that the great fight over Clause Four was won and lost. Indeed, some of my readers today will be at a loss to understand what the words mean, and many others, when asked what it was all about, would mutter something about Tony Blair and his followers, and leave it at that. And yet it is no exaggeration to say that if the Clause Four battle had been lost, so would have been the chances of a Labour government. Some clause, eh? Let's hear it just once again. It was:

To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service.

And that might have scuppered the Labour Party? Well, try a dip in the headlines: "Clause Four is consigned to dustbin of history", "Triumphant Blair", "Blair hails day of destiny".

Or, on the other side of the road, Arthur Scargill denouncing every word Blair speaks: "Following in the footsteps of failure", "Scargill calls for general strike"; Arthur Scargill relates the "new realism" of the Labour leadership directly to the betrayals of the General Strike and the class collaboration of the 1920s.

Er . . . the 1920s, with or without betrayals, class collaboration and even a General Strike, were roughly three-quarters of a century ago. Surely Arthur Scargill has caught up this far?

No, he hasn't. But that is the great thing about Arthur, and the thing I greatly admire, and the thing I am now going to praise. The praise cannot be undiluted: he has made dreadful mistakes and worse than dreadful mistakes, but take out the darkness, the folly, the waste of words and actions, the quasimories that he has repeatedly led his followers into and there is yet a grandeur even in his absurdities and pig-headedness. You can see that grandeur very clearly if you put Bern beside Scargill. These men were both entirely on the same side at the same time and in the same way, yet one stars the water every time he speaks, while the other tries to make a figure. (My eye just then fell upon a tiny cutting: "Arthur Scargill was hissed and slow-

handclapped. Tony Benn sat sullen and silent, surrounded by political enemies.")

And now — the greatest folly imaginable, yet heroic at the same time — Arthur has founded a new party. The Socialist Labour Party it is called, and good luck to it, a great deal of which he will need. Never mind that new parties, in our system, can never thrive unless over decades; never mind that he has now no following to speak of; never mind that he has been thrown out of the real Labour Party (which, I suppose, he will call the fraudulent Labour Party, while no doubt also calling Tony Blair a fraudulent Labour Party leader); never mind that he will become a figure of laughter — never mind all of this and more. Arthur Scargill will not be defeated.

It is a remarkable story, is it not? Consider: when Ted Heath faced up to the miners, he was beaten good and proper, but pretended that he wasn't. When Margaret Thatcher fought them and beat them, it was the end, not only for Scargill but for the whole world of coalmining.

But Arthur put his telescope to his blind eye, and — this is the most remarkable part of the story — most of his dwindling band was led by Arthur into quicksand and never seen again, though the dwindling band could see what was happening. Is that not a remarkable essay in loyalty? And doesn't it make Arthur much more heroic, as well as much more daft?

For not only has Arthur established a new party, he is trying it out. I am writing on the eve of a by-election; the election was necessary because of the death of Derek Enright, who had held the seat for many years. It is indeed one of the most solid seats in the country; at the last election, Derek Enright had a majority of 22,000, and the successor, Jon Trickett, can hardly fear his Tory

enemy, who polled fewer than 8,000 votes. But if the Tory is unlikely to dent the Labour armour, what chance has Arthur Scargill?

True, Arthur has not taken the plunge himself: one of his cohorts is standing in for Arthur. The Arthurian candidate is a lady, Brenda Nixon, who fights under the banner of Women Against Pit Closures — hardly a clarion to make the voters come running. She has other problems: there are a dozen or so other candidates, including the National Democrat candidate, the Green candidate, the UK Independence candidate, the Natural Law candidate, the Liberal Democrat candidate, the Mark Thomas candidate for Friday Nights Channel 4 candidate, and of course our dear old friend, the Lord Sutch Official Monster Raving Loony candidate.

Dem, the Mark Thomas candidate for Friday Nights Channel 4 candidate, and of course our dear old friend, the Lord Sutch Official Monster Raving Loony candidate.

Oh, and I nearly forgot: the Tory candidate.

Now, what chance has Brenda Nixon to carry off the prize? Yet there she goes, with her campaigners in hopes of carrying off the prize. And she is going into the fight with banners fluttering — what does that say about Arthur Scargill?

Well, one thing it says about Arthur Scargill is that he lives in the past, but knows that the past has gone by. When he is jeered at, and he now gets more jeers than cheers, he says: "They were the same words used against Keir Hardie in 1888 when he first stood as an independent socialist. Now everyone wants to claim Keir Hardie as their own. People should learn a bit of their history." Yes, they should. But the tiny remark I have quoted — "They were the same words used against Keir Hardie in 1888 . . ." also contained a few more words, which I left out; they were, after the name Keir Hardie, ". . . one of the founding fathers of the Labour Party . . ." For, you see, most

people today do not know who Keir Hardie is.

You and I would think that coalmining was a trade no human being should be obliged to take. Indeed, I remember an article I wrote which finished with a prayer that it would be eliminated for ever very soon. Not so the miner: incredibly, he loved his trade, not least because of the tightly-knit communities. Then my prayer was answered, to the dismay of the miners. What does a superannuated coalminer do? Embroider pillow-cases? Draw the dole!

Even Arthur Scargill could not stop the blood-letting as more and more pits were closed; but at least he could denounce his enemies — those enemies who had given in and let Clause Four go. Now he is very close to making himself a fool: his new party will get a handful of votes — about the same number as Lord Sutch — and his new "party" will withdraw on the vine. What I wonder, does he feel, or indeed say, about the pit which was taken over by a group of superannuated miners (nobody wanted it), who worked their butts off and not only made it the last pit in their area, but made a handsome profit too? Arthur speaks:

I feel a free man, like I've been let out of jail. There's a sense of relief. I am almost exuberant, to be campaigning for a new party. We are all singing from the same socialist hymn-sheet — and we're not worried about offending the spin-doctors

But Arthur must know, even as he hides the truth from himself (he cannot hide it from others) that the very best he can hope for with his absurd Socialist Labour Party is a couple of deposits held, and even that is very unlikely.

Go back to the fight over Clause Four: if the man in the moon trained his telescope on the proceedings, he would be entirely nonplussed. He would see several camps, all on the same side of the battle, but with half of them fighting the other half. I dare not ask Arthur point-blank whether it is better to have a milksop Labour government or another Tory government; I say that I dare not ask him, not because he would hit me on the head with a rolling-pin, but because I fear he would say "Yes, it's better to have the Tories in again, than to change even one word — nay, one syllable — of Clause Four". And do you know what Mrs Brenda Nixon, the candidate for the SLP, says of the head of the Labour Party? She says, "I haven't an ounce of respect for Tony Blair".

It ain't cricket, cobber
Simon Barnes
toasts the whingeing Aussies

This is one of those moments for feeling grateful to Australians. As the grim news of the bombings in Sri Lanka tempts us to despair, so the Australian cricketers cheer us with a comic subplot. This is nothing less than Shakespearean: the drunken porter, the gravediggers, the Australian cricketers. The single-mindedness with which each set of characters follows its own concern, unaware of the priorities of a greater world, grants a welcome moment of relief to us all.

In Colombo, the death toll is horrific, the number of the wounded beyond easy comprehension, but the Aussies respond: what about our cricketers? The Australian Cricket Board goes into a huddle early next week for a good old grumble. They are considering forfeiting their World Cup match in Sri Lanka, which should take place on February 17.

That would mean donning the ponies to the opposition, and it's the sort of idea they want well ventilated, because they want the world to know that, well, it just isn't right. Compare and contrast with the Zimbabwean team manager, Denis Stark, on hearing the news of the bombings. Asked if his team would now consider withdrawing, he said: "We've thought about it. But we come from a country that knows about war and we're not going to worry about a few bombs."

The Australians reject any such blithe acceptance of life's turbulence. Life, after all, shouldn't be like it, was in Colombo yesterday. How many times have I heard an Australian explain "It's not fehhhh"? This search for the Protean quality of fairness is something of a national characteristic, but in sport the gold of fairness becomes transmuted, by a sort of reverse alchemy, into the base metal of whingeing.

It was the Australians who first called the settlers from England whingeing Poms. It became accepted myth that Poms always complained and seldom washed. How can you tell that a 747 landing at Sydney is from London? It carries on whining after the jets have been switched off. But this eternal complaint about the Poms is itself a kind of whinge. And when one turns to sport and sets coherent thought aside, the scope for whingeing is unending — and Australians, it must be said, are masters.

Their cricketers are up to their necks in a scandal with Pakistan, in which they allege that Salim Malik, then Pakistani captain, tried to bribe them to lose a Test match. The Aussies now face death threats on their return to Pakistan.

Long before the Sri Lankan bombing, the Australian board said that any player who felt he would be in danger at the World Cup, which will be held all over the sub-continent, was free to withdraw without penalty.

Death threats, however, occupy the Australian mind only when they tear themselves away from the awkward right arm of Mutiah Muralitharan. Australian umpires believe that this Sri Lankan slow bowler gives extra zest to his leg-break by throwing the ball — which is illegal, of course. Yet legal or not, Muralitharan is hardly the world's most ferocious bowler. Bringing the might of cricket law to bear on the rather hapless young fellow is a sledgehammer and nut situation. But it's not fehhhh, you see . . .

Meanwhile, David Campese, the Australian rugby player — a man touched by greatness — has been whingeing on about the England rugby team. Again, "English players can't make decisions when the pressure's on" Rob Andrew has gone, but nothing has changed. This crosses the boundary from rival-baiting to whingeing, especially when you recall that the last time England played Australia at rugby union, it was the quarter-final of the World Cup and England won — thanks to a last-minute drop goal from Rob Andrew.

Australian whingeing is an ancient tradition. The longest whinge in sporting history goes back to 1932-33, when Douglas Jardine captained England in Australia at cricket what will be remembered forever as the Bodyline series. Today, even the most fastidious would not object to the bowing. Only two batsmen were injured in the entire series: that can happen in one day in a modern game.

But physical assault was not the real issue. The issue was planning, and the plan's accurate, professional execution. England sought to nullify the opposition's greatest weapon, the genius of Don Bradman. It was not the bowling of Harold Larwood that was vicious; it was the thinking of Jardine.

This signalled the end of sport as the world then knew it. Sport was no longer fun: not at the highest level. It was instead a fierce and terrible drama which stripped bare the nature of its participants. It destroyed some and gave others impossible glory. Sport became the most brutal examination of character.

Modern sport is often enthralling, often profoundly satisfying. But it is seldom much fun for the participants, anyway. If matters too much for that. So perhaps the Aussies were right to whinge — are right to carry on whingeing.

True whingeing is nostalgia for a world that never existed: a world when everything was fun and everything was fair. In every complaint, from the Colombo cri de coeur to the Campese rent-a-whinge, there is a yearning for a better world. Life shouldn't be like this, it's not fehhhh. And in the end, there is a kind of nobility in it.

Poor John

A SENSITIVE chap, John Major. The latest spate of poisonous stories about a new chasm between himself and his Chancellor has jangled a raw nerve.

On Wednesday, he invited a dozen MPs to lunch at Downing Street — trusted souls, mostly, although there were one or two licensed dissenters. And without a by-your-leave, he burst into a torrent of denial. He insisted that he and Kenneth Clarke stood four-square together (Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet come to mind) over Europe and the economy.

"It was extraordinary," says one of the bouncers. "Nobody was even suggesting there was anything in the stories. He just came out with it, got it off his chest."

The assembled audience clucked and nodded sagely as they listened to his bafflement and surprise at the appalling suggestions of a rift. But as they left they were in broad agreement — the PM doth protest too much.

• The Princess of Wales is still discussing the Queen's letter urging her to divorce. Perhaps she is stalling until after a two-day conference at the Park Lane Hotel next month before making a

decision. One of the organisers is her solicitor, Mishcon de Reya. And the subject? Big Money and International Divorce.

Longueurs

THE GUEST of honour at the opening night of Simon Callow's interminable new play, *Les Enfants du Paradis*, was Patricia Quinn. Callow has dedicated the work to her late husband, Sir Robert Etchells.

Adrian Noble, the RSC's artistic director, admitted yesterday that Callow "could perhaps have cut it a bit more"; and even the star turn in the play, Joseph Fiennes (brother of Ralph), said the length of the play made for difficulties. "I think he could have been a bit more ruthless," he said. "It's a bit of a problem, the logistics of getting home after the show."

DIARY

Though delighted by the dedication, this put her in a tricky position — she had to sit through the entire four-hour work. "It's a very difficult play to stage," she says with tact. "There are 60 scenes in it. The real trouble is that it's a film, not a play."

Lady Romsey, the elegant wife of Earl Mountbatten's grandson, now identified as the "horsey" voice whinnying away for 17 minutes to the Duke of Edinburgh on his mobile phone, has a less than traditional taste in jewellery.

Her title and her fine hairband have not prevented her from acquiring the kind of personalised pendant which even Gerald Ratner might balk at. On a chain around her neck nestles a heart with the letters of her name, Pen-

ney, picked out in it — the female equivalent of a gold medallion on a hairy chest.

The former Penny Eastwood was briefly linked romantically to Prince Charles in 1975, and he is known to have a penchant for

jewellery incorporating names.

Mary Spillane, the image expert from Colour Me Beautiful, was astonished: "It's a very adolescent thing to wear."

• The Duke of Edinburgh is not the only person to have had trouble with his mobile phone. In a written answer in Hansard, Robin Squire, the junior Minister for Education and Employment, said that ministers had twice had mobile phones "cloned" by fraudsters.

And each time the phone in question belonged to Robin Squire.

High pitch

THE BEAUTIFUL shrine of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been visited by many eminent Roman Catholics, but this summer it can expect three more in the substantial and tuneful form of the three tenors — all of whom are themselves Catholics.

Pavarotti, Domingo and Carreras have agreed to sing there in July to mark the 15th anniversary of the first vision of the Virgin Mary. The concert, to be transmitted across the world by satellite, will tell the story of the shrine since 1981, when six children claimed that the Virgin Mary had appeared.

P.H.S

ELOCUTION LESSONS</



SPANISH MALPRACTICE

A bad decision for Iberia, Spain and Europe

The EU Transport Commissioner, Neil Kinnock, was asked to rule this week on whether Spain should be allowed to break its promise to its partners and pump £440 million into its bloated national airline, Iberia. Presented with an opportunity to fight for a level runway for Europe's airlines, Mr Kinnock flinched and found excuses to let Spain bend the rules. Iberia, on its record of monumental incompetence and waste, does not deserve to survive under its present ownership. Since the Greek, Portuguese, Belgian and Irish airlines are queuing up for extra aid which they too promised they would not need, this decision is a grim precedent — as politically feeble as it is economically monstrous.

Those who defend the European Commission's "pragmatism" rest their case on two arguments: that Iberia has been given less money than it requested and on specific restrictive conditions which are held to mean that the proposed investment is identical to a private-sector decision. This is backed by another, unstated, argument which holds that the Commission, battered by recent unpopularity, should not force a high-profile nationalised company into sale or bankruptcy while every politician from Stockholm to Seville is urging action to bring down the continent's dole queues.

The Commission, which wields huge powers against monopolies and the abuse of government subsidies to private businesses, is making a grievous error. The EU treaty encourages the commissioners to balance legal, commercial and political factors in their state aid and competition decisions. But to grant most of Iberia's request is both against the treaty's spirit and against the interests of Europe's air travellers. Any prospect of lower fares fades yet further.

Nor does this week's decision in Brussels give any real help to the Iberia employees whose jobs have been "protected". Three-

and-a-half thousand of them will lose their jobs anyway during the next two years, and the remainder will have to wait even longer for the arrival of a disciplined and competitive management which can truly secure jobs by making the airline competitive in the global market. Meanwhile, the rest of the Spanish economy suffers from the diversion of capital by the Government into a plainly inefficient enterprise.

Last year British Airways made a profit of £301 million without state subsidy; Iberia made a pre-tax loss of £269 million. According to Mr Kinnock, the principle of phasing out airline subsidies should give way to the "market investor principle". This "principle", which has put down sturdy roots in European law, allows state aid to a company if the State is behaving as a private-sector investor would. But, if the Spanish Government's investment in Iberia were a sound bet, the state holding company would not need to be making it. The private-sector market would provide investors and the Government could withdraw. Iberia is a poor investment because it is too badly run to make money for its investors.

British Airways has already begun legal action against the Commission for its supine permission to the French government to put £2.3 billion into Air France, currently losing around £50 million a month. Given the Commission's once-firm determination not to waste any more money on Iberia, British Airways should have strong arguments to mount a parallel legal challenge. The Commission's collective fecklessness in the face of Spanish blackmail also raises a wider-point about its powers under the EU treaty. Powers to police state subsidies are among the strongest that the Commission has. Why should national governments grant it any increased powers at this year's review of the Maastricht treaty when existing powers are used in such an anti-European way?

DEGREE QUALITY

Fees may be the future, but not at a flat rate

University vice-chancellors meet today to decide if they should end Britain's tradition of free access to higher education. Support seems solid for a proposal to charge £300 as the price of a place at university. The proposal is crude, but it has one merit: it focuses attention on the need for further reform in academia — to improve financing, defend standards and allow liberal learning to flourish in our finest institutions.

The flat-rate fee is a tactic adopted by the Government into reversing the spending constraints imposed on universities. Disappointed by a budget that cut higher education expenditure by 7 per cent, and envisaged a further 6 per cent cut in 1997-98, the vice-chancellors have counter-attacked. They hope the prospect of a hefty bill arriving at thousands of middle-class homes next September will be enough to force a government retreat.

The Government may hope that some of the vice-chancellors will prove fairhearts. Less prestigious universities may calculate that a levy will deter applicants and that any fall in admissions will mean large losses which an extra £300 from each remaining new student will not offset. The Government may also judge that even if the vice-chancellors hang together they cannot all rely on their own governing bodies for support. As any student of C.P. Snow knows, it is a rare head of an academic institution who is truly Master in his own House. The Education Secretary may refuse to budge, knowing that it will be in the interests of some universities to break. But relying on the willingness of weaker brethren to abandon the levy will not be enough.

The current funding troubles are only the most obvious symptom of a much deeper malaise. The Government has congratulated itself on a rapid expansion of student numbers — as though academic productivity

it were an end in itself. But the expansion seems to have been accompanied by a decline in standards and erosion of independence.

Universities have relaxed entrance requirements in order to accept ever more students, and extra income direct from the Government. There is little incentive to be selective; thus, even though entrance numbers increase, so too does the proportion of those dropping out. Worse still, there is worrying evidence that students now face far less stringent final examinations. As numbers overall have gone up, so too have the numbers of students who secure first-class degrees. The proportion of firsts has remained constant over the last four years despite a 65 per cent increase in undergraduate numbers. It seems, at best, curious that so many new students should reach a level once the preserve of a genuine elite.

Reversing the cuts might not make universities more choosy, simply more greedy. The most appropriate answer is matching the universities' power to select with a mechanism to make students more discriminating. Harsh Economics may determine student numbers, but Logic should not be neglected. Universities should be encouraged to contemplate top-up tuition fees, but rather than a flat-rate these should reflect the quality of the qualification on offer. Of course students from poorer families should be exempt, and many institutions should survive without having to charge, but those from comfortable families should pay if they want excellence. That would remove the need for the better universities to expand needlessly and allow them to maintain their traditional methods of teaching in tutorials or seminars. Reform before the next election is unlikely, but if higher education is to combine the virtues of access and excellence, there must be open minds on entrance fees.

YOUNG MASTERS

Music comes early: painting must wait

An unknown self-portrait by Francis Bacon, painted when he was only 21, has just been found in a private collection of paintings. As Richard Cork writes on our Arts pages today, this is a significant discovery: Bacon was a fussy fellow, whose dislike of his own youthful work drove him to destroy much that he painted before his *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*.

A survivor from those massacres, the self-portrait ought to teach us a little about this tortured artist as a young man. But how much, on its own, can it teach us? As a picture, it is neither original nor attractive, but rather an awkward pastiche of the modes of its time. It has none of the "reek of human blood smouldering" — to use Bacon's own favourite line from Aeschylus — that one has come to associate with the painter's familiar oeuvre. If this self-portrait is typical of his earlier work, then the later Bacon is clearly finer art.

This should not surprise us. Painters, like most composers of music, novelists and judges, change with age. And they usually get better. Take Cézanne, a major exhibition of whose work begins next week at the Tate Gallery in London. His early work is dreary, dark and morbid, and unduly concerned with violence. As a painter he found his language only much later in life, with his technique of constructing volume out of brush

strokes. Mondrian changed too — and radically — moving with time from sweet Dutch landscapes to brightly coloured grids and rectangles.

Very occasionally, painters get worse with age. André Derain is an example. A fauve — and close friend of Matisse in the latter's wildest phase — he was a Young Turk who turned out to be an old bore, ending his artistic days as a Neo-Classical reactionary. Such change in individual style is most easily discerned in art's modern era: for in the days of the Renaissance a young artist was often merely a copyist in the school of a master. A painter's early style declared itself only exceptionally, such as in Leonardo's angel in the painting by Verrocchio.

Painters take longer to mature than composers of music do: and there is more to this assertion than just the example of Mozart. The Viennese prodigy may have composed seven symphonies by the time he was 10 years old — and six operas by his fifteenth year, including *Mitridate* — but there are others too, including Mendelssohn, whose genius shone earlier than that of any serious painter. Francis Bacon took some while to blossom — if that is the right word to describe paintings such as his anguished, screaming Popes. In that, he was only of his artistic type. The best painters, like their counterparts in wine, mature only with age.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Judgment on a pay rise for MPs

From Mr Norris McWhirter

Sir. Twice before MPs have voted to more than double their salaries (letter and leading article, February 1). In 1954, after a 17-year standstill, they raised their basic pay from £600 to £1,250; while in 1964, after a nine-year standstill, they gave themselves a raise to £3,250. The taxpayer now, however, is presented with the spectre of a doubling from their 1954 raise.

The electorate of taxpayers and others ultimately dictate whether a parliamentary candidate receives any salary at all. It is entitled to recall how each MP has regarded his custodianship of our parliamentarian, hereditary, and national sovereignty. We had long regarded the rule of law as dependent upon being governed by consent — ie, rule by an administration that could be sacked.

On May 20, 1993, our MPs collectively carried the third reading of the Maastricht Bill by 292 to 112. Why, now that they have given away the above rights to overseas institutions that are unspeakable, should they expect to double their remuneration? They have diminished themselves to regional, off-shore councillors in a chamber which some of them plan will take on the ambience of a museum.

If there were any logic or justice, unless they have a change of heart and of spirit, they ought, as in the national crisis of 1931, to vote themselves a pay cut.

Yours faithfully,
NORRIS MCWHIRTER (Chairman),
The Freedom Association,
35 Westminster Bridge Road, SE1.
January 30.

From Lord Mayhew

Sir. I am not a hardship case, and am not complaining; but when I left the House of Commons in 1974, my index-linked pension, based on 27 years' service (including five as a minister) in 1980, was £4,034 (payable from 1980). It is now £10,118.

I was astonished when MPs recently voted themselves pension increases for their service before 1983, but withheld the increase from former members who had served the same years and paid the same pensions contributions.

I think the less MPs have to do with their emoluments, the better.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW,
House of Lords.
January 31.

From Sir Laurie Magnus

Sir. Many people of quality decide to keep out of politics simply because it does not pay well enough. Prosperity for self and family, which can only be earned elsewhere, comes first.

Some will always say that public service should be more important than money. They echo predominantly Conservative thinkers of the 19th century who felt that MPs should not be paid at all.

But let us not lose the chance to attract greater quality into public life by restricting salaries. If any MP does not wish to accept a pay rise, he or she can always return it to the Paymaster General.

Yours faithfully,
LAURIE MAGNUS,
Flat 8, 44 Lower Sloane Street, SW1.
February 1.

From Mr Peter Le Cheminant

Sir. It is to be hoped that the implementation of any increase in the pay of MPs which results from the present clamour is deferred until after the next election. Otherwise the main impact will be to boost the pensions of the substantial number of present MPs who will not return to the House next time.

Yours etc,
PETER LE CHEMINANT,
23 Weyles Avenue,
Burpham, Guildford, Surrey.
January 31.

From Dr P.J. Fabricius

Sir. The National Health Service has a ready precedent to solve the question of MPs' pay. A realistic salary should be set for those MPs who spend the whole of their time working for Parliament. Every MP should be required to declare in confidence all other sources of earned income.

Those who earn more than 10 per cent of their parliamentary salary from other sources should forfeit an appropriate proportion of the parliamentary salary, as do maximum part-time NHS consultants, despite being required still to devote "substantially the whole of their time" to the NHS.

I have the honour to remain,
Sir, your obedient servant,
P.J. FABRICIUS,
3 Rowhills Close, Farnham, Surrey.
January 31.

From Sir Anthony Beaumont-Dark

Sir. The view that many senior MPs, who should know better, put around that if you paid MPs twice as much you would get better MPs is, at the kindest, nonsense. The opposite in my view is the case: all you will end up with is many more young MPs who have done nothing with their lives except be professional.

Your obedient servant,
ANTHONY BEAUMONT-DARK,
124 Lady Byron Lane,
Kingswood, Solihull, West Midlands.
January 31.

The need for a long-term solution to university funding

From the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham

Sir, Simon Jenkins ("Dons must do or die", January 31) hits the nail on the head.

In the last 50 years or so our universities have established a high reputation internationally and have generally provided a high-quality education. At last, people are realising that this reputation is under threat. Student numbers have increased dramatically whilst the unit of funding for teaching each student has been cut by 28 per cent over the last six years.

We cannot reverse this situation by merely tinkering with the funding system: it needs a totally fresh approach and a new financial mechanism. The only way to break through the present impasse is for students to pay a share of tuition costs.

Students should be supported by some kind of income-contingent loan scheme, the level and timespan of repayment being dependent on the level of earnings. Other measures would have to be taken to protect the less well off: the student might have a voucher provided by the State giving a basic sum of taxpayers' money, and would supplement this with a direct payment backed, perhaps, by a loan.

In this way more resources will be made available to improve the quality of service, the student can choose the university which most suits his interests and the resulting mechanism would free universities substantially from the present bureaucratic system of government funding.

Universities should then move to charging full-cost fees, the level of which will vary according to the nature and quality of the course. Centres of academic excellence in different fields will emerge and will charge higher fees. Demand will begin to be marketed.

Much may be learnt from our experiences at Buckingham. We are the only independent university in Britain

with no direct taxpayers' support. Our fees reflect the costs of providing a high-quality service and personal attention. After 20 years of existence we are in a position to encourage other universities to secure greater independence and to pursue a new funding system for the next century.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD LUCE,
Vice-Chancellor,
The University of Buckingham,
Buckingham MK18 1EG.
January 31.

From Mr Robert Jackson,

MP for Wanstead (Conservative)

Sir. The universities should go ahead with their proposed £300 "registration" or "quality maintenance" charge (report, January 30), but they would be well advised to describe it simply as a "fee" and to think of it as initiating a long-term strategy.

Students should be supported by looks like a calculated pre-election political manoeuvre the Government is entitled to be irritated, and the necessary dialogue between it and the universities about this matter will not work as it should. (Incidentally, neither the universities nor the Government should over-estimate the electoral effects of what the universities are contemplating: the middle-class electorate is more realistic than either party.)

The financial problem to which the proposed fee is a solution is a long-term one which will not go away with a change of government: the vice-chancellors should pay attention to what Labour is saying about taxes. Taxpayers simply cannot afford to give a university education to 30 per cent of our young people of the style which it provided for only 10 per cent of them little more than a decade ago.

Universities should then move to charging full-cost fees, the level of which will vary according to the nature and quality of the course. Centres of academic excellence in different fields will emerge and will charge higher fees. Demand will begin to be marketed.

To work as a long-term policy the private fee needs to be backed up by legislation to extend the student loans scheme to enable it to be used to ad-

vance money for fees. This is why the universities need to talk seriously to the Government, and the Government should listen.

Meanwhile those die-hards among the vice-chancellors who think that £300 a year will choke off demand from potential students should recall that the introduction of student loans coincided with an explosion of demand for higher education. There is also something odd about the idea that a university education might be worthless to a student at a price above £30. It might be asked, anyway, whether such a student would be sufficiently motivated to benefit from a university course.

Yours etc,
ROBERT JACKSON,
House of Commons.
January 31.

From Professor Sir Graham Hills

Sir. The vice-chancellors may be unwilling to settle for the stop-gap palliative of top-up fees before securing a better basis for their long-term security. At the heart of the matter is the lack of any serious consideration of the true costs and true benefits of higher education.

Who are the customers? Who are the beneficiaries? Should all the beneficiaries contribute to the cost? Is the Government a provider, a customer or a regulator?

Past inquiries have led to the conclusion that government and students are both customers, and that they need to negotiate economic prices with their suppliers, the universities. That is the way to common sense, a proper set of values, quality control, diversity, and an economic basis for extending the scope of higher education.

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM HILLS,
Sunny-side of Threepwood,
Laigh Threepwood, Beith, Ayrshire.
January 30.

Room for savings on back pain bill

From Professor Michael Rosen and Professor G. Waddell

Sir, Backache is a 20th-century health-care disease and there is now a revolution in back care. Less than one in 500 (0.2 per cent) of back problems need surgery; even slipped discs usually get better without an operation.

As your excellent series of articles on "Beating back pain" (January 22 and 23) makes clear, doctors are beginning to accept that bed rest is bad. With simple measures to control the pain, and staying active, back pain will usually get better.

If more help is needed to control the pain, then the patient should see a physiotherapist, osteopath or chiropractor for manipulation.

However, some people do not get better and need more help. Time is vital: once off work for six months, there is only a 50 per cent chance of returning to work. At present, patients may wait months for surgical consultations and high-tech investigations, only to be told that

there is no surgical problem.

A report last year by the Clinical Standards Advisory Group (CSAG) recommended that resources should be shifted to primary care in order to provide early active management and rehabilitation. There is strong scientific evidence for such an approach, and the group's recommendations were supported by the Government, but little is being done to implement our report.

Backache is now costing the UK £6 billion a year; and there is potential for considerable savings. Most NHS services and treatment for back pain are no longer acceptable. There is an urgent need for action, in



COURT CIRCULAR

SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK
February 1: The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh were represented by the Lord Somerleyton, Master of the Horses at the Memorial Service for the Viscount Boyne (Lord in Waiting and Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire) which was held in St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, this afternoon.

The Prince of Wales was represented by Mr Gerald Ward.

Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, and The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were represented by Major Nicholas Barnes.

The Duke of Kent was represented by Mr Andrew Palmer.

Princess Alexandra, The Hon Lady Ogilvy was represented by Mrs Peter Afia.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
February 1: The Princess Royal this morning departed Sea Lion Island for Fox Bay East where Her Royal Highness attended a Smoko in the Community Centre with West Falkland residents.

The Princess Royal afterwards departed Fox Bay for Hill Cove and attended a Luncheon with other West Falkland residents.

Her Royal Highness this afternoon visited Port Howard and attended a Smoko at Port Howard.

Today's royal engagements

The Duke of Kent, as president, will attend the Engineering Council forum at Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre at 10.00.

Today's events

The Queen's Life Guard mounts at Horse Guards at 11.00.

Premium Bonds

The £1 million prize in the Premium Bond draw for February was won with bond number 34LS 815724. The winner, who lives in Co Ayrshire, has a holding of £5,000.

Luncheon

HM Government
Mr Malcolm Rifkind, QC, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, was the host at a luncheon given by Her Majesty's Government yesterday at Carlton Gardens in honour of Mr Shirin Peres, Prime Minister of Israel.

Reception

HM Government
Mr John M. Taylor, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Competition and Consumer Affairs, was the host yesterday at a reception given by His Majesty's Government at Lancaster House to mark the 20th anniversary of the National Exhibition Centre.

Birthdays today

Mr Roger Brooke, chairman, Cambridge Investments, 65; Mr Roger Brooke, broadcaster, 45; Sir Gordon Brown, former Chief Justice of the Bahamas; 30; the Earl of Clarendon, 63; Dr Michael Crichton, neurologist, 66; Mr Andrew Davis, conductor, 72; Rev Dr Victor de Wail, former Dean of Canterbury, 67; Sir Robert Douglass, founder, Douglas Group of Companies, 97; Lord Eatwell, Sir Michael Eban, Israeli politician, 81; Dr Tony Flower, economist, 45; Sir Norman Fowler, MP, 58; M Valery Giscard d'Estaing, former President of France, 70; Mr Hughie Green, broadcaster, 76; Mr H.V. Hughes, former Principal, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, 70; Mr David Jason, actor, 56; Mr David Jones, chief executive, Next, 53; Sir Clas Keswick, chairman, Hawkshead Bank, 56; Dame Aly Macmillan, former civil servant, 92; Miss Elaine Stritch, actress, 69.

Royal Warrant Holders

Colonel Christopher Pickup has been appointed Secretary of the Royal Warrant Holders Association in succession to Commander Hugh Faulkner who has retired.

Appointment

Mr Jim McCullagh has been appointed Ambassador to Iceland from mid-May in succession to Mr Michael Hone who will be retiring from the Diplomatic Service.

Dinners

Fruiterers' Company
Mr M.J. Tanguy, Master of the Fruiterers' Company, assisted by the Wardens, presided at the annual dinner held last night at Plaisterer's Hall. During the evening he presented the Ridley Silver Medal to Dr J.D. Quinlan for distinguished service to fruit growing. Sir Graham Dorey, Bailiff of Guernsey, Lord Justice Staughton and Mr D.G. Hope-Mason also spoke.

Composers' Company
Mr Anthony Appleyard, Master of the Composers' Company, presented the David Tong award to Mr John Leighson-Cox at the

annual dinner held last night at Painters' Hall. The Forces Link Cup was presented to Major-General Edward Willmott, Honorary Colonel of the 101 Regiment. Dr Christopher Sketchley also spoke.

The Fruiterers' Company
The following have been elected officers of the Fruiterers' Company for the ensuing year:
Master: Mr M.J. Tanguy. Upper Warden: Mr D.Tullett, and Remy Warden: Mr A.E. Redell.

**BMD'S: 0171 782 7272
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000**

DEATHS
AGRELL - Stuart Clief, 60, died suddenly on 25th January in his 82nd year. Deary loved father of Peter, and wife of the late Barbara. Burial at Crematorium of Cambridge City Cemetery (East Chapel) at 11.45 am Friday 9th February. Friends of the family are invited to make donations to either Help the Hospices or the Stroke Association.

ARTHURS - Nunthorpe George Edgar Arthur C.R.E., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., died suddenly on 25th January in Cambridge on 20th January 1995 aged 90 years after a short illness. Dearest wife and dear father of the late Barbara and dear son of Francis and Barbara. Mourned by all his relatives. Burial Service at St George Church, Cambridge, on Tuesday 3rd February at 11.30 am. Donations to the Stewards' Please, Donations to the Ringing Cross Hospital.

EVAN - Denis George, Lt Commander R.N. retired, died suddenly on January 20th at 10.30am. Beloved son of Sarah and Robt and much loved grandfather. Burial service at Poole Vale Crematorium on Wednesday 7th February at 3pm.

HART - Janet Jeanne Favia Carter, 77, Terraces, London SW19. After a long illness died peacefully on 27th January 1995. Funeral Service on Tuesday 28th January at 2.45 pm (not as previously stated). Private interment at Sherborne Abbey on Thursday 30th January 1995 at 1.30 pm. Donations to Army Charities c/o The Light Dragons Charitable Trust, Home Farm, Sherborne, Dorset, BA12 5DR, or The Royal Welsh Dragoon Guards, Fifehill Barracks, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Friends and family are invited also Trooper John Keane and Trooper Andrew O'Connor. "Gentle giant" who died but whose love they have had, but whose love they have had."

HOLDSWORTH - Muriel on 30th January, 1995, dearly beloved husband of Betty Holdsworth, 80, died peacefully in Bawtry. Wife of the late James Carson M.D., F.R.C.P., a dear friend of the local medical profession. Funeral Service at St Anne's Church, Bawtry on Friday 2nd February at 11.15 am. Friends and family made donations to the Multiple Sclerosis Society, c/o J.W. & J. Michael, 108 New Street, Bawtry, DN45 1XN.

CARSON - Col. James, On 21st January 1995, Margaret, 70, died peacefully in Bawtry. Wife of the late James Carson M.D., F.R.C.P., a dear friend of the local medical profession. Funeral Service at St Anne's Church, Bawtry on Friday 2nd February at 11.15 am. Friends and family made donations to the Multiple Sclerosis Society, c/o J.W. & J. Michael, 108 New Street, Bawtry, DN45 1XN.

TYRMAN - On January 27th, 1995, at his home in Portslade, Johnstone and Toss, a daughter, Olivia Caroline Mary.

SMITH - On February 1st at The Portland Hospital, Helen Smith, aged 30, died suddenly after giving birth to her son, Sam, a brother for Henry.

LOHNE DAVIES - To Steve and Diane, the parents of their second son, Lawrence, brother to Gemma, of 11.40 am Saturday 28th January 1995. Mourned by all the Melton Morrells. Their love is still concerned.

MURKELLE - On January 27th, 1995, at his home in Portslade, Johnstone and Toss, a daughter, Olivia Caroline Mary.

WARD - On January 27th, to Fiona (nee Barnes) and Timothy, a son, Magnus, a son, Jack Alexander.

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DEATHS
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LAVELLIE - On 29th January 1995, in her 82nd year, Dearly loved mother of Peter, and wife of the late Barbara. Burial at Crematorium of Cambridge City Cemetery (East Chapel) at 11.45 am Friday 9th February.

LEWIS - Dearly loved mother of Peter, and wife of the late Barbara. Burial at Crematorium of Cambridge City Cemetery (East Chapel) at 11.45 am Friday 9th February.

MADDEN - Richard William, killed in action over Germany during the war, buried in Bawtry. Beloved son of Brian and Sheila, greatly loved brother of Eddie, Pauline, and Peter. Dearest son of Eddie and Sheila. Mourned by all his relatives. Burial Service at St George Church, Cambridge, on Tuesday 28th January 1995 at 1.30 pm. Donations to Army Charities c/o The Light Dragons Charitable Trust, Home Farm, Sherborne, Dorset, BA12 5DR, or The Royal Welsh Dragoon Guards, Fifehill Barracks, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

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Social Club with the community.

The Princess Royal this evening attended the Falkland Island Government Reception at the Town Hall, Stanley, followed by a Legislator Dinner at Malvern House Hotel.

JAMES PALACE
February 1: The Prince of Wales, Colonel-in-Chief, The Royal Regiment of Wales, received Lieutenant Colonel Peter Davies upon relinquishing his appointment as Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, and Lieutenant Colonel Robert Aitken upon assuming the appointment.

KENSINGTON PALACE

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YORK HOUSE

February 1: The Duke of Kent, President, this evening attended a Gala Performance of *La Bohème* at the Royal Albert Hall, London SW7.

YORK HOUSE

February 1: The Duke of Kent, President, this evening attended the Engineering Council's Unification Launch dinner, at the Institution of Civil Engineers, Great George Street, London SW1.

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YORK HOUSE

OBITUARIES

SIR JOHN CARMICHAEL

Sir John Carmichael, KBE, civil servant, businessman and golfer, died on January 6 aged 85. He was born on April 22, 1910.

JOHN CARMICHAEL returned to his native Scotland from Sudan in the late 1950s. The experience he had gained in Africa as a civil servant and financial and economic adviser to the first post-independence Sudanese Government made him a welcome addition to the boardrooms of several top British companies. Besides his time at Fisons — where he was chief executive, 1962-66 — he served the fishing, gas, jute and chemical industries.

Carmichael was also a first-class golfer, who played off a single-figure handicap. He could often be seen striding around the Old Course at St Andrews, and won the Royal and Ancient's Jubilee Vase there in 1964. He was captain of the Royal and Ancient, 1974-75.

John Carmichael was born in St Andrews and educated there at Madras College. He graduated from St Andrews University with first class honours in mathematics and physics. He was given his rugby Blue, and had a trial for the Scottish team. Although he never won a cap, he was a reserve on 13 occasions.

After a year on a Commonwealth Fellowship at the University of Michigan, he returned to Britain and joined Guardian Assurance. Then in 1936 he decided on a complete change of career. He joined the Sudanese Civil Service, and went out to Sudan, where his duties included a spell as Permanent Under-Secretary to the Ministry of Finance. In that post Carmichael was given a free rein to develop his business skills. He used to joke that, on one occasion during the Second World War, he was involved in selling the entire cotton crop.

Sudan was one of the few African countries to retain the services of some British civil servants after independence. Carmichael stayed on after 1956, and Ismail al-Azzawi, the first Prime Minister, later fondly described him as "the white man in our woodpile". But in 1959 Carmichael returned to Scotland and bought a house at Balmuil, just outside St Andrews. There he cultivated a hand-some garden, full of all the known



species of heather in Scotland. He was appointed to the UK delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations and the following year, 1960, joined Fisons as a non-executive director, initially as chairman of its pest-control subsidiary in Sudan.

Two years later he was made chief executive of Fisons, succeeding Avison Wormall. Carmichael brought in George Burton as his deputy chief executive, and while Burton concentrated on overseas trade, Carmichael turned his mind to the home market.

Wormall had already begun the process of diversification of Fisons interests, and Carmichael continued the process. For the past century, the Fisons market had been largely UK-based. Carmichael made it more of an international player, and he spent a good deal of time abroad, travelling with Burton to India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Kenya and Uganda. By-products to the Fisons fertiliser

range were introduced, and included weedkillers, shampoos and specialised food products. While other British companies struggled through a lean period, Fisons remained in healthy shape throughout the mid-1960s. After George Burton had succeeded as chief executive in 1966, Carmichael became deputy chairman for six years, and then reverted to his old status on the board as non-executive director until 1980.

Fisons was one in a growing number of board appointments. By the late 1960s, Carmichael had been brought onto the board of Jute Industries (renamed Sidlaw Industries in 1969), and groomed by Sir William Walker, the outgoing chairman, as heir apparent. He was appointed chairman in 1970 and remained in the post for the next decade.

Carmichael's main achievement at Sidlaw was to transform it from an old-fashioned textile business, based in

Dundee, to a major provider of services to the nascent oil industry in Scotland. When he arrived, jute, the product on which the business's fortunes were founded, was increasingly being provided not by Dundee companies but by those in Bangladesh and Calcutta. Diversification was the only option if the company was not to sink with the rest of the industry.

In 1972 Carmichael organised the lease (subsequently the purchase) of reclaimed land within the port area of Peterhead, north of Aberdeen. The company began to organise the logistics of the management of these ports, and so got involved, at just the right moment, in North Sea oil. The period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s was one of substantial growth for Sidlaw, much of it attributable to Carmichael's timely initiative.

He was also chairman of the Herring Advisory Board, 1960-63, and deputy chairman of the Independent Television Authority, 1960-63. By the mid-1970s he had reduced his commitments in the South and was concentrating his energies in Scotland. He served on the boards of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Abbey National, and the Scottish Development Advisory Board. He was appointed KBE in 1985.

During his period as the Rector's assessor at St Andrews University, 1965-68, he worked with such diverse figures as C. P. Snow, Sir Lancelot Constantine and Lord Boothby.

Carmichael was a softly-spoken man, with a disarming, loquacious smile. He enjoyed family life, and every year took his family on holiday, sometimes less successfully than others. One year, he rented a caravan with which to tour Scotland. He reached as far as Speyside, not much north of St Andrews, before discovering that he had little idea how to reverse the cumbersome vehicle, let alone park it. Instead, he booked the entire family into the local hotel for the entire holiday.

Those who knew him well suspected that he may never have had any real intention of venturing further north than Speyside. With many good golf courses at hand, there seemed little reason to.

He is survived by his wife Cecilia, whom he married in 1940, and by one son and three daughters.

JOHN EDLIN

John Edlin, journalist, died in Johannesburg after a stroke on January 29 aged 90. He was born in Invercargill, New Zealand, on August 21, 1905.

TO THE despair of his editors — and to the delight of his readers — John Edlin decided early on in his 33-year-long career as a journalist in Africa that real stories could be gathered just as easily in bars and shebeens as by more orthodox means. But, despite achieving cult status as a heron drinker and featuring as a thinly disguised hell-raising character in a number of excellent novels set in Africa, John Edlin always remained a fine reporter. From the Congolese uprising in 1966, where he tracked down the French mercenary leader Bob Denard and other notorious soldiers of fortune, Edlin chronicled with distinction the colonial and civil wars in Angola and Mozambique, the Rhodesian bush war and the collapse of old Cold War rivalries.

For more than three decades, he traversed independent Africa making friends and enemies of some of the most influential politicians; he was expelled from seven countries and jailed in at least two.

He witnessed mass starvation in Ethiopia in 1985 and once described how he had watched doctors marking the foreheads of children who could be saved. He asked Mother Teresa what could be done to help the others. "What are you going to do?" she said. Edlin considered the question over a beer or two, and in six months had provided start-up funds for an orphanage for 600 children outside Addis Ababa.

Divorced but childless, he had earlier funded the educa-



tion of Moroccan orphans after a reporting assignment on the Saharan war and supported a children's home in Zimbabwe. His open-handed generosity extended to any of his colleagues who had fallen on hard times and to young reporters struggling to make their way. In Zimbabwe he was known as Chibhoyi, or "one of the boys" in the Shona language of the black journalists to whom he was mentor and friend.

John Edlin came to Southern Rhodesia from New Zealand in 1963 and went to work for a number of Rhodesian newspapers before leaving for Zambia and the Congo. Hired by the South African-owned Argus Africa News Service, he rebased himself in Ghana and travelled widely throughout

West Africa, breaking many trips to retrace the steps of Graham Greene's *Journey without Maps*.

Edlin provided the novelist David Pownall with the model for a raucous young reporter from New Zealand, John Pyper, in his two novels set in Zambia, *The Raining Tree* and *African Horse*.

Returning to southern Africa from Ghana in 1972, he worked for British newspapers and Reuters before becoming a full-time Associated Press correspondent in Rhodesia in 1976. At the time of his stroke on the dance floor of a night club in Dakar, Edlin had completed a year-long assignment teaching African journalists in Senegal.

He is survived by his mother and two brothers.

JAMES HOLLAND

James Holland, OBE, one of the designers of the 1951 Festival of Britain, died on January 7 aged 90. He was born in Gillingham, Kent, on September 19, 1905.

HIS students will remember James Holland as a fine teacher, his colleagues as a gifted painter, illustrator and designer, his family and friends as a man of conscience — but history will remember him for his major contribution to the 1951 Festival of Britain.

Born in Kent, James Sylvester Holland was the son of a naval blacksmith and never lost his love of the sea. After going to school at the Mathematical School, Rochester, and studying painting at the Rochester School of Art, where he returned later as a governor, he won a rare painting scholarship to the Royal College of Art in 1924. His tutor was Paul Nash and contemporaries there included Henry Moore, with whom Holland worked at one time, and the Canadian painter James Bowes. He and Bowes became lifelong friends, and together they made a number of trips to France, where Holland held his first exhibition before he graduated.

Following his successful period in command, he was promoted colonel and served on the staff of Allied Forces Central Europe and as an instructor at the RAF Staff College before being appointed Inspector of Intelligence and Commandant of the Joint Services Intelligence Centre in the rank of brigadier. He retired from the Army in 1967 but remained in government service, engaged in security work until 1970.

For eight years he served as general secretary of the Soil Association, working with E. F. Schumacher and Lady Eve Balfour. For many years during his retirement he was an active member of the Soldiers' Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association, but was able to find time to play single-figure handicaps golf and local cricket in and around Hartlepool in Norfolk, where he had made his home.

He is survived by his wife Joan, whom he married in 1939, and by their two sons and two daughters.



much fun was in no small part due to the experience and skill of the design team, who remained as close friends at the completion of the job as when they began. When the exhibition closed Holland was appointed OBE.

He was president of the Chartered Society of Designers, 1960-61, and shortly afterwards he was appointed group art director at Erwin Wasey Advertising. In 1963 he accepted the offer to return to teaching as head of graphic design at Birmingham Polytechnic. In 1971, on his retirement from Birmingham, Holland became education officer at the Chartered Society of Designers and he used his experience to help design courses to become more professional. During this period he wrote *Minerva at Fifty*, a history of the society.

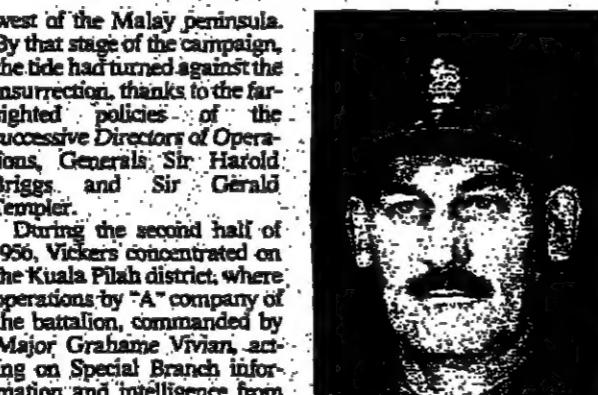
Holland is survived by his second wife Jacqueline, two daughters from his first marriage and a son and a daughter from his second.

BRIGADIER BILL VICKERS

Brigadier Bill Vickers, DSO, OBE, died on January 28 aged 82. He was born on January 19, 1914.

THE challenge of commanding an infantry battalion other than one of one's own regiment is always formidable. The task faced by Bill Vickers, a tall, raw-boned man of rather gaunt aspect, was especially so. After 22 years of service exclusively with British troops, he was appointed to command 2nd Battalion 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Skinner Rifles), whose stocky, tough but unfailingly humorous soldiers stood only as high as his shoulder. This was in Hong Kong in January 1956 but the battalion was due to move to Malaya, where the eight-year-old communist insurrection still smouldered on.

Vickers commanded 2nd/2nd "Gorkhas", as they were invariably known, during two years of intensive operations against the residual hardcore of the communist terrorists, initially in Negeri Sembilan state in the south-



citation for his award of the DSO in 1958 read: "Lieutenant-Colonel Vickers has added to the renown and fighting traditions of his regiment and proved himself to be a fearless, skilled and determined leader. Inspired by his leadership, his men achieved many successes in jungle operations against a wary, treacherous and dangerous enemy."

The following year saw 2nd/2nd "Gorkhas" operating in the neighbouring state of Johore, where a high proportion of the predominantly Chinese population persisted in their support of the terrorists still in the jungle. Accompanied by a Special Branch officer and only a small escort, Vickers trekked into the interior on four occasions to negotiate personally the surrender of terrorists. He was mentioned in despatches in 1957 and the

engineer. He was educated at Clifton, which he represented at cricket, rugby, fives and boxing, and entered the Royal Military College Sandhurst via a cadet scholarship in 1922. He was commissioned into the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in 1934.

After pre-war service in India and Burma with the 2nd KOYLI, Vickers was recalled to accompany the 1st Battalion to France in 1939. Later, as part of the 15th Infantry Brigade, the same battalion took part in the ill-fated British intervention in Norway. Virtually without air support, the brigade was landed near the Aandalsnes fjord on April 18, 1940, only to be withdrawn 12 days later in the face of the German advance northwestwards up the Gudbrand Valley from Oslo, strongly supported by the Luftwaffe.

After staff college in 1941 and appointments in England, he returned to regimental service as second-in-command of 4th Battalion The Somerset Light Infantry in time for the Normandy invasion. He was wounded and evacuated, only to return as soon as he had

recovered, this time in command of the 1st Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment in the 43rd Wessex Division, which saw stiff fighting in Holland and Germany in the winter of 1944-45.

He was appointed OBE in 1945 in recognition of his war service and posted to the Staff College, Camberley, as an instructor in 1948. Shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, he was appointed AA & QMG of the 1st Commonwealth Division. The years 1951-52 were the grimmest of this gruelling war, during which Vickers was mentioned in despatches and awarded the United States Bronze Star. A brief period with 2nd KOYLI was followed by brevet promotion to lieutenant-colonel, a period on the Allied Staff in Berlin and then command of 2nd/2nd Gurkha Rifles.

Following his successful period in command, he was promoted colonel and served on the staff of Allied Forces Central Europe and as an instructor at the RAF Staff College before being appointed Inspector of Intelligence and Commandant of the Joint Services Intelligence Centre in the rank of brigadier. He retired from the Army in 1967 but remained in government service, engaged in security work until 1970.

For eight years he served as general secretary of the Soil Association, working with E. F. Schumacher and Lady Eve Balfour. For many years during his retirement he was an active member of the Soldiers' Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association, but was able to find time to play single-figure handicaps golf and local cricket in and around Hartlepool in Norfolk, where he had made his home.

He is survived by his wife Joan, whom he married in 1939, and by their two sons and two daughters.

PERSONAL COLUMN

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

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NEWS

Tories rule out leadership poll

■ Senior Conservatives capitalised on improved party morale by formally ruling out any challenge to John Major's leadership before the next general election.

The surprise move came after a series of strong question time performances by the Prime Minister exploiting the Harriet Harman affair, and as the Labour leader himself acknowledged the gains the Tories had reaped.....Page 1

Internet shopping boom forecast

■ The Internet is set to become a multi-billion pound world supermarket. Two leading credit card companies announced that they have developed a way of making safe payments over the electronic computer network that encircles the globe. The computer purchase of goods could grow from a £350 million-a-year business to £200 billion.....Page 1

Dog judgment

A tearful and acrimonious battle over the ownership of JJ, a potentially valuable Irish setter pup was decided when a judge agreed it could remain with the couple who bought it.....Page 1

Harman row

The row over Harriet Harman's decision to send her son to a selective grammar school provoked a series of bitter internal rows in her constituency Labour party at Camberwell.....Page 10

Birthday unrest

Half a million miners chose President Yeltsin's 65th birthday to go on a nationwide strike in an echo of the industrial action that helped to bring down Mikhail Gorbachev.....Page 11

Airline dispute

The British Government may mount a legal challenge to the European Commission's decision to let Iberia, Spain's national airline, receive another €440 million in state aid.....Page 12

Missing doctors

Hospital casualty departments are facing the worst shortage of doctors in living memory and are struggling to keep their doors open, said the BMA.....Page 2

Firemen killed

Two part-time firemen died inside a blazing house in the former mining village of Blaina, Gwent, after wrongly being told a young boy was trapped inside.....Page 3

Royal accountant

The post of Keeper of the Privy Purse is going to Michael Peat, a former partner in the accounts, KPMG.....Page 5

Church pensions

The Anglican Church's 1.5 million regular attenders will be expected to dig deeper in their pockets to fund the clergy's pensions under proposals to go before the General Synod next week.....Page 6

Wedge-shaped UFO over Manchester

■ A British Airways jet had a close encounter with an unidentified flying object while landing at Manchester. The Boeing 737 was overtaken at high speed by a wedge-shaped craft. Captain Roger Wills reported that the UFO, emblazoned with small white lights and possibly a black stripe, flashed so close that his co-pilot ducked.....Page 1



The Princess Royal examines bales of wool at a shearing shed during her visit to Goose Green in the Falkland Islands

BUSINESS

PPP: The private healthcare insurance group is poised to shed its provident status and turn itself into a limited company valued at an estimated £500 million. The move could pave the way for an eventual stockmarket flotation.....Page 21

Economy: Production from British manufacturers hit its lowest point for three years, leading to the first decline in manufacturing employment for two years.....Page 21

Retail: Stephen Hinchliffe, the Sheffield businessman, is set to expand his empire with the purchase of Saxon and Curteis.....Page 21

Markets: The FTSE 100 fell 6.5 to 3752.8. Sterling rose from \$3.3 to \$3.6 after rises from \$1.510 to \$1.5127 and from DM2.2476 to DM2.2597.....Page 24

SOCIETY

Football: Roger Stanislaus, of Leyton Orient, was banned for one year by the FA after being found guilty of using a performance-enhancing drug.....Page 40

Cricket: Australia may forfeit their first game in the World Cup unless the venue is changed from Comombo. A decision will be made early next week.....Page 40

Rugby union: For all the talk of expansive play the primary objective for England and Wales in the five nations' championship match at Twickenham tomorrow will be to win.....Page 40

Skiing: The Great Britain women's alpine skiing team have returned to the Tyrolean mountains that claimed the life of Kirsten McGibbon.....Page 38

TECHNOLOGY

Taste of Bacon: As an unknown self-portrait by Francis Bacon is unveiled to the public for the first time, Richard Cork assesses its importance as a work of art.....Page 29

Terrible theatrical death: *Fields of Ambrosia*, an American musical set on Death Row, really is as ghastly as it sounds, says Benedict Nightingale.....Page 29

Italy's finest: Crooner Paolo Conte may not be a household name in Britain but he is now bringing his Italian charms to the Barbican.....Page 30

Youthful twin track: The chart wannabes Gemini, twin brothers, have found a novel way to get their musical message across to the young: they are taking it into the schools.....Page 31

**EDUCATION**

Valerie Grove meets Thomas Quasthoff: the singer who received tumultuous applause at the Wigmore Hall this week. "I am blessed," he says — but he was born with no arms and stunted legs.....Page 14

Scandals: When the film *Train-spottting* comes out later this month, people who know nothing about it will come forward to give their opinions on drug addiction. But just what is the depressing reality?.....Page 15

ENTERTAINMENT

Driven to revolt: Today, Vice-Chancellors will decide whether to charge new students a levy of £300 — a first step towards paying for higher education.....Page 33

Tricks of the exam trade: How to choose a tutorial college, for Easter revision, and get the most out of it.....Page 33

OPINION

Nato must cease: being a simple tool of American policy, under instruction from the Pentagon. The US must accept the development, in the heart of the alliance, of a real European defence identity. Jacques Chirac has been arguing this case for a long time. But today the US cannot suspect him of conspiring to chase the Americans out of Europe, as de Gaulle was often suspected of doing.....Le Figaro

NORMAN CLARK

Preview: A solar-powered rickshaw could be the transport of the future. *Tomorrow's World in 1996* (BBC1, 7.30pm). Review: Matthew Bond checks out a political drinking-hole.....Page 29

Spanish malpractice

Powers to police state subsidies are among the strongest that the Commission has. Why should national Governments grant it any increased powers at this year's review of the Maastricht treaty when existing powers are used in such an anti-European way?.....Page 17

Degree quality

Support seems solid among vice-chancellors for a proposal to charge £300 as the price of a place at university. The proposal, though crude, has one merit: it focuses attention on the need for further reform in academia.....Page 11

Young masters

An unknown self-portrait by Francis Bacon, painted when he was only 21, has just been discovered in a private collection of paintings. This is a significant discovery, for Bacon destroyed much of his own youthful work.....Page 11

BERNARD LEVIN

Arthur Scargill is very close to making himself a fool: his new party will get a handful of votes — about the same number as Lord Sutch — and his new "party" will wither on the vine.....Page 11

SIMON BARNES

It was the Australians who first called the settlers from England whinging Poms. But this time, complaint about the Poms is more kind of whinge.....Page 11

PETER RIDDELL

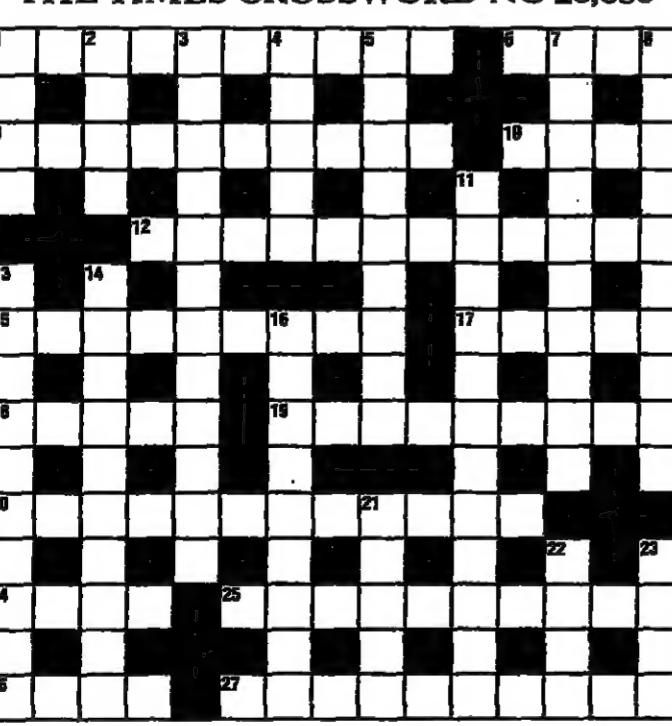
The debate about MPs' pay is much broader than review bodies, or even salary levels. It is about what sort of MPs we want.....Page 10

SIR JOHN CARMICHAEL

Sir John Carmichael, civil servant and businessman; John Edlin, journalist; Brigadier Bill Vickers; James Holland, a designer of the Festival of Britain.....Page 19

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Solutions to university funding crisis: MPs demand for pay rise; treatment for backache; ghostly smells.....Page 11

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